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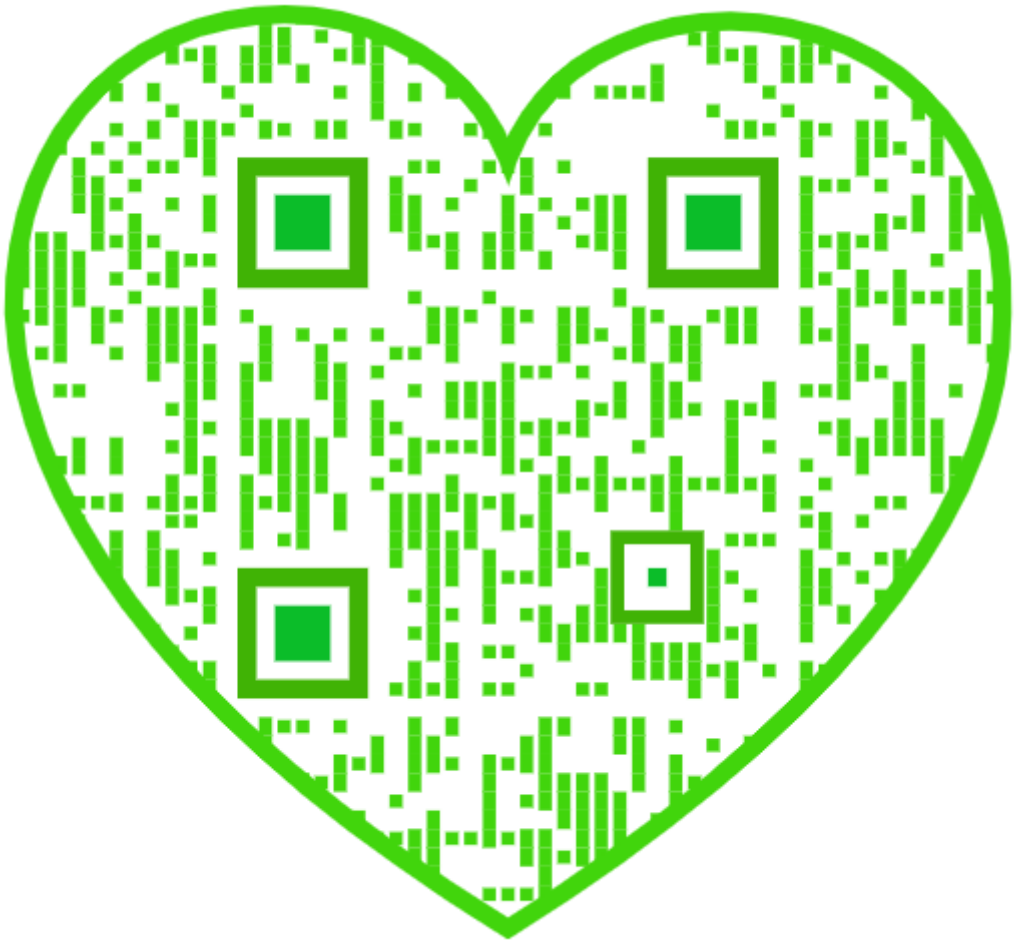

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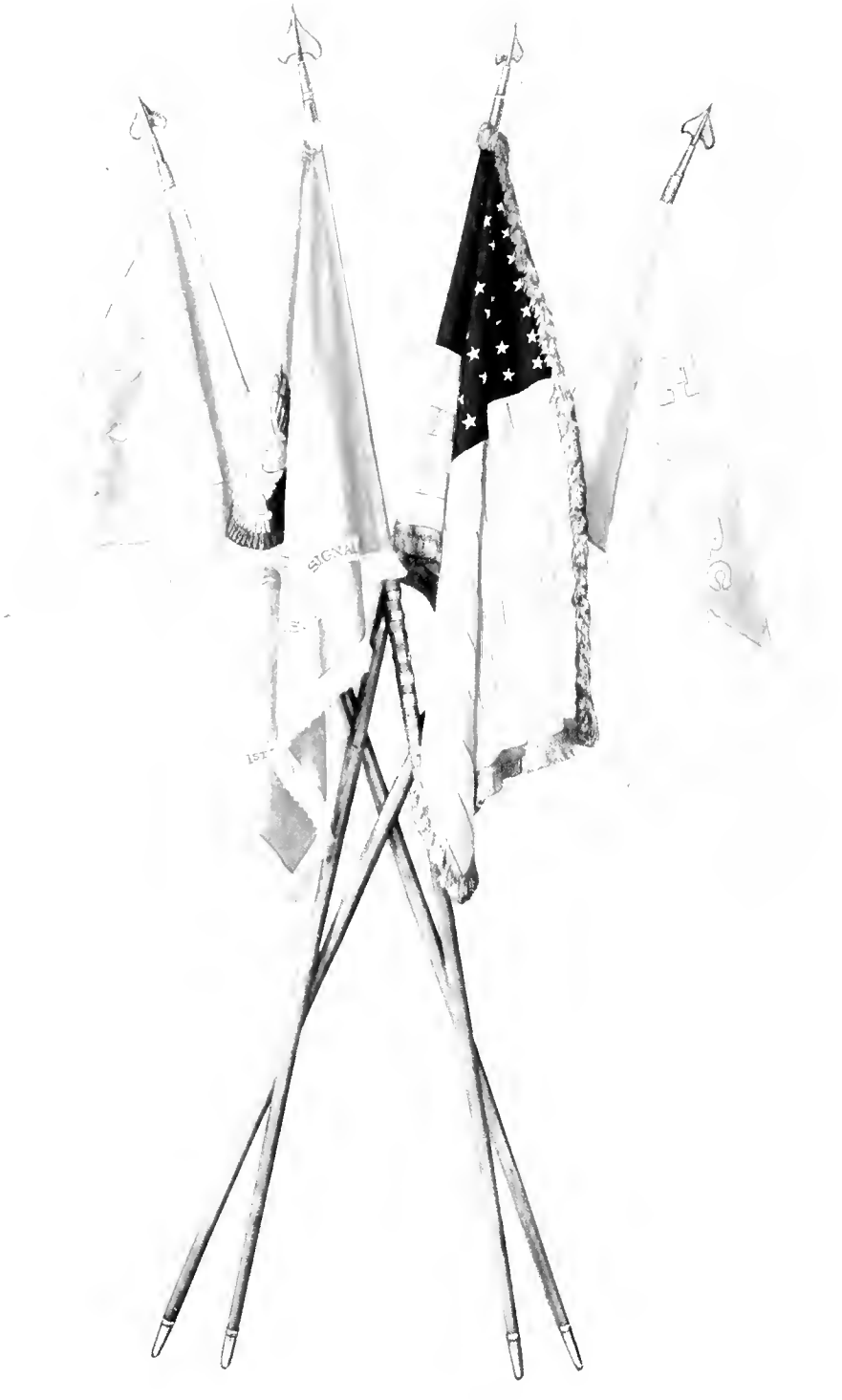

THE BATTALION STANDARDS
AND GUIDONS

THE
FIRST BATTALION

THE STORY OF
THE 406th TELEGRAPH BATTALION
SIGNAL CORPS, U. S. ARMY

By

PETER LAMBERT SCHAUBLE

PHILADELPHIA
1921

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THANKS is hereby extended to the following members of the Battalion for their assistance in the preparation of this book:

MAJOR THOMAS H. GRIEST *who gathered much of the data, including personal accounts, pictures and maps and prepared a comprehensive chronology upon which the text of this story is based.*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES W. HUBBELL *who prepared a series of memoranda on the Battalion.*

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM W. BRITTAIN *who assisted with certain engineering details.*

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FIRST SERGEANTS MARTIN H. BUEHLER, 2ND, and DAVID M. HACKETT, 2ND, *who checked the Company "D" and Company "E" records respectively.*

P. L. S.

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FOREWORD

THE 406th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps, U.S. Army, which went to France as the First Telegraph Battalion, U.S. Signal Reserve Corps, saw continuous service throughout the entire American participation in the World War. It was organized during the very month when war was declared. Four months later it was in France—going over on one of the earliest convoys. To realize what this means it must be understood that the Battalion was recruited from telephone employees—not military men. To land a body of men on foreign soil four months after they received their first military training is an accomplishment of which every one associated with the organization may well be proud.

From that time until the Armistice there was no let up in its activites. The silver bands on the Battalion Standard tell the story. They were awarded by the War Department and are engraved with the following inscriptions:

1ST TELEGRAPH BATTALION
U. S. Signal Reserve Corps

TOUL SECTOR, FRANCE
28, February to 21, March, 1918

CHATEAU-THIERRY SECTOR, FRANCE
23, June to 14, July, 1918

CHAMPAGNE-MARNE DEFENSIVE, FRANCE
July 15 to July 18, 1918

Aisne-Marne Offensive, France
July 18 to August 6, 1918

Toul Sector, France
20, August to 11, September, 1918

St. Mihiel Offensive, France
September 12 to September 16, 1918

Verdun Sector, France
20, to 25 September, 1918

Meuse, Argonne Offensive, France
September 20 to November 11, 1918

The 406th has passed into history. It made a wonderful record. It is only proper and fitting that its accomplishments should be set down in permanent form. If these pages will, in the future, assist in recalling memories of its participation in the greatest war the world has ever seen, they will have fulfilled their purpose.

-- 1 - 3 '21

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NOTE—The First Telegraph Battalion was recruited from The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania and its Associated Companies, The Delaware and Atlantic Telegraph and Telephone Company and The Diamond State Telephone Company. Whenever in these pages, therefore, The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania is mentioned, it should be understood to include the Associated Companies.

In similar manner, when the Battalion is referred to as the Pennsylvania Battalion, it is to be understood that some of its members were from Southern New Jersey (the territory of The Delaware and Atlantic Company) and some were from Delaware (the territory of The Diamond State Company).

CHAPTER I

From "Civies" to Khaki

IT WAS the month of July, 1918. The enemy had penetrated to the Marne. Each day brought increasing evidence of a further rush by the Germans. On the night of the fourteenth the enemy artillery became extremely active. Shells began to drop like hail on the hill back of the Battalion. What were the orders to be? Was there to be further retreat—or was the First Corps, to which these Bell boys were attached, finally to be given a chance to join in a test of strength with the oncoming Germans?

Schedules had been prepared for either eventuality. In case of retreat, "E" Company was to salvage everything possible and destroy all materials left. "D" Company was to hurry to a new location and establish communication for the Corps. Should orders be for resistance and counter-attack, the men in the exchanges were to refuse all telephone service to those not on a preferred list. Every human effort was to be put forth to keep every line working.

The cannonading continued during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth. Major Hubbell, commanding the Battalion, received word on the seventeenth that the Corps was to attack on "J" day, "H" hour. At 10 o'clock that night it was learned that "J" meant the eighteenth, and "H" 4:25 a.m. Immediately the prearranged program went into effect.

Shells continued to drop all around. At 11:30 p.m. all communication to the 26th Division suddenly ceased. This meant a break. Two of the men followed the line and five hundred feet away fell into a shell hole. The bursting shell had ripped the wire to pieces. Quick repairs were made. Hardly

had these men returned to the dugout when all lines to the rear went out of service. A "gang" immediately started back and found the line almost completely razed by shell fire. Amid the roar of guns and the constantly exploding shells, they continued making repair after repair. Time and again, after a break was fixed, another explosion made it necessary to do the work over. Not until the following night did the men get back to the Battalion.

It was the beginning of the end. All the work of stringing wires, setting poles, placing switchboards, much of the time under fire, had been preparatory to this great day, which, though little realized at the time, was the high-water mark of German success.

That eighteenth of July marked the culmination of an effort which was begun early in 1917, before our country entered the war. The great importance of the Signal Corps' work had been demonstrated in the European struggle and Congressional action had provided for the organization of a Signal Reserve. Because our country had not then declared war, provision was made merely for the Reserves to spend fifteen days each summer in a training camp. The intention was to prevent the mistake, made in Europe, of allowing technical men to enter the combat forces and thus become lost to their country so far as their specialized technical abilities were concerned.

It was but natural for the War Department, in organizing a Signal Reserve Corps, to turn to the Bell System. This was the largest organization in the world doing a communication business. It had always been in the forefront in the development and improvement of means of communication. It had a personnel of technical men who could be drawn upon to form the nucleus of the new organization. The War Department, with the officials of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, soon developed plans by which several Reserve Signal Battalions were to be organized from the employees of the various Associated Bell Companies. John J. Carty, Chief Engineer of the Bell System, later Vice-President, was appointed a Major and promoted to Colonel in the Signal Reserve Corps. His technical ability and thorough cooperation were to a large extent responsible for the success of the movement.

Through the interest and enthusiasm of its Vice-President and General Manager, L. H. Kinnard, who later became its President, The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania was the first company to start the work and, with the help of Lieutenant Colonel Charles McK. Saltzman (later Brigadier-General) from Washington, and Captain W. S. Grant (later Colonel on the General Staff) of the Signal Office at New York, plans were made for recruiting one battalion in Pennsylvania.

It was decided that of the two Companies one was to be organized in eastern and central Pennsylvania, comprising the Philadelphia and Harrisburg Divisions of the Bell Company. This became Company "D." The other, which

Leonard H. Kinnard

became Company "E," was to be drawn from the Pittsburgh Division, embracing western Pennsylvania.

As the entire Battalion was to be recruited from the Bell ranks, the first step necessary was the selection of its officers. Consideration was given to those men who had had military training, but term of service and experience in the telephone business were considered as being of greatest importance. Almost without exception, those who were recommended for commissions had completed over twelve years with the telephone organization. After the required physical and mental examinations, nine men were selected and recommended to the War Department as having the qualifications required of officers. They were commissioned in the Spring of 1917. Then came the first step in the detail organization of the two Companies. Circulars were prepared and sent to all of the Telephone Company's male employees. This was just before our country entered the struggle and but little was known of what the actual work of the Telegraph Battalion was to be, though in those dark days it was realized that our country could not remain out of the conflict much longer. Of the six thousand male employees in the Company, many of whom were beyond the military age, fourteen hundred or more than twenty per cent applied. This was nearly seven times as many as could be selected.

War was declared before the applications were received, and it became known rather definitely that those who were selected would have some work more serious than the "fifteen days in a training camp each summer." The applications were quickly classified, and soon a number of men had been tentatively selected for further examination. These men, about five hundred, were all personally interviewed, the fact that war had been declared put squarely

At Philadelphia

At Harrisburg

TAKING THE OATH

before them to make sure that, should they be selected, each would eagerly serve his country to the best of his ability whenever and wherever called upon. Throughout these interviews there was almost a tendency to discourage the applicant—so anxious were the officers to have none but the keenest and most enthusiastic men in the Battalion. Finally, those who had been interviewed and had established their determination to enter the Battalion if possible, were given a preliminary physical examination. Thus, when recruiting papers were forwarded to New York, it was with the knowledge that a reliable and physically capable group of men had been selected for this first unit. In these preliminary physical examinations Dr. Macfarlan, who later became the Battalion Medical Officer, spent many strenuous days.

So far, none but the officers had definitely obligated themselves to the Government. True, the applicants had all agreed to many provisions, but everything that is done before one finally takes the Oath seems distinctly informal. "Taking the Oath" is the last step in turning one's self over to the will of the Military Authorities. Company "D's" Harrisburg detachment lined up on April twentieth, the remainder of "D" Company, at Philadelphia, on the twenty-first, and Company "E," in Pittsburgh, on the twenty-fifth, and the New Castle detachment on the twenty-sixth. These were solemn occasions, and all hands were stretched high in an effort to demonstrate their zeal and earnestness as the men replied, "I do." Few could have then believed that, in little over a month, three of these men would be with General Pershing —enroute to France; and that in four short months this entire group of raw recruits would be whipped into shape as splendid soldiers, landed in France, and sharing in the uphill fight which on that eighteenth day of July had reached its crest.

Colonel John J. Carty

On May twenty-second, 1917, the War Department issued Special Order 131, designating this unit as the First Telegraph Battalion, Signal Reserve Corps. That this unit of the several Battalions organized from the Associated Bell Companies became the "First"

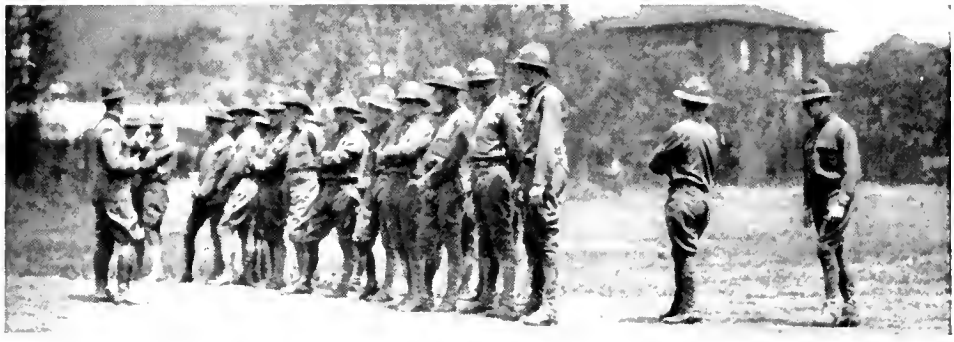
At Pittsburgh

At New Castle

speaks volumes for the interest of the officials and personnel of The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania.

And it was not only the first Reserve unit to be organized. It was the first Reserve unit to be ordered overseas; the first complete Signal unit to arrive in France; the first technical unit to be attached to General Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces; and, when the First American Army Corps was formed, it was again the first technical unit designated as a part of the Corps.

Mr. Kinnard called it "the Battalion of hand picked men." From the method of selection, the reader may judge as to the propriety of the term! The Battalion consisted of ten officers and some two hundred and fifteen enlisted men. As further evidence of the quality of its personnel, it should be noted that from these two hundred and twenty-five men there developed, prior to the close of the war, two lieutenant colonels, five majors, three captains, eight first lieutenants, nine second lieutenants, and more than a score of non-commissioned officers.



Chapter II

Soldiers in the Making

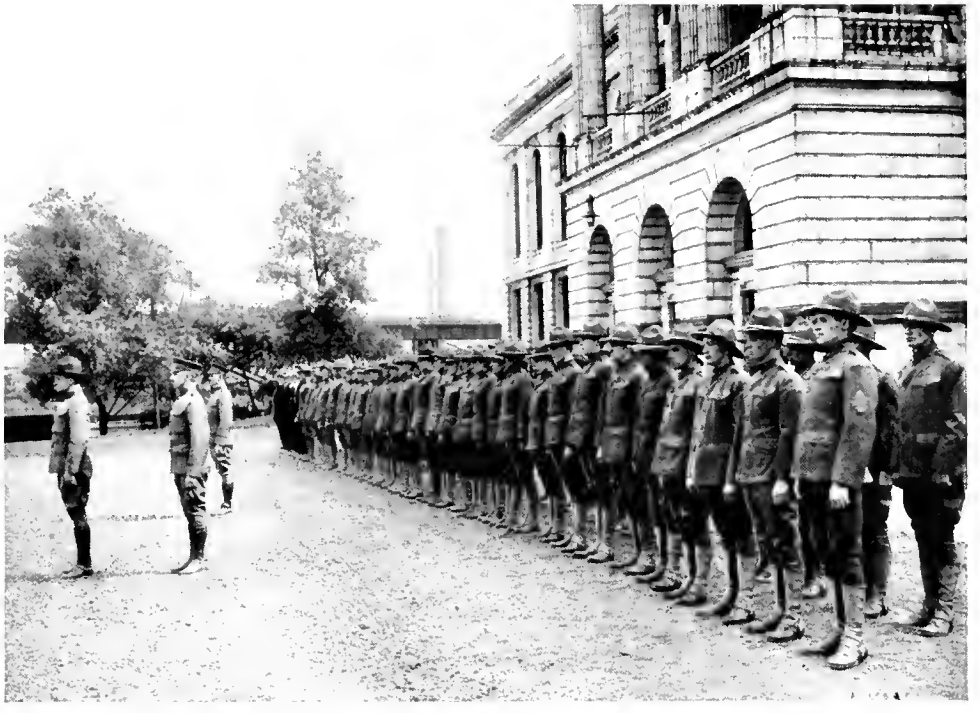
AS SOON as the officers were selected, correspondence courses in infantry drill regulations were started, with weekly assignments and subsequent examinations. When the noncommissioned officers had been chosen, classes were organized and drills held on two evenings each week. By the end of April the Companies were organized and drills were held every Saturday afternoon in halls rented for the purpose.

Although by this time war had been declared, the Battalion was still subject to the Act of Congress which provided merely that the members were to attend camp for fifteen days each summer, and that at this camp they would be organized into companies; no uniforms or other equipment were to be furnished the men until they arrived at camp. But a state of war now existed which made it necessary that the Signal Reserve Battalions be definitely organized and fitted out. It was this situation that faced Lieutenant Fielding P. Meigs, Supply Officer, who demonstrated now for the first time that when it was necessary for his Battalion to have something, nothing could prevent him from obtaining what was needed. In this case there were no regulations under which it was possible to obtain any equipment for the men before they were called into active service. Equipment, especially uniforms, was necessary at once. Lieutenant Meigs, with the help of Lieutenant Decker, a man with years of experience in dealing with Signal Corps property, finally succeeded in obtaining all of the clothing required. As a matter of fact, the Battalion was so well uniformed as to draw comment from the Regular Army Officers when it was mobilized at Monmouth Park. The Supply Officer later had many similar opportunities to display his ability in securing supplies. He kept the Battalion better equipped with motor vehicles than any similar unit in France;

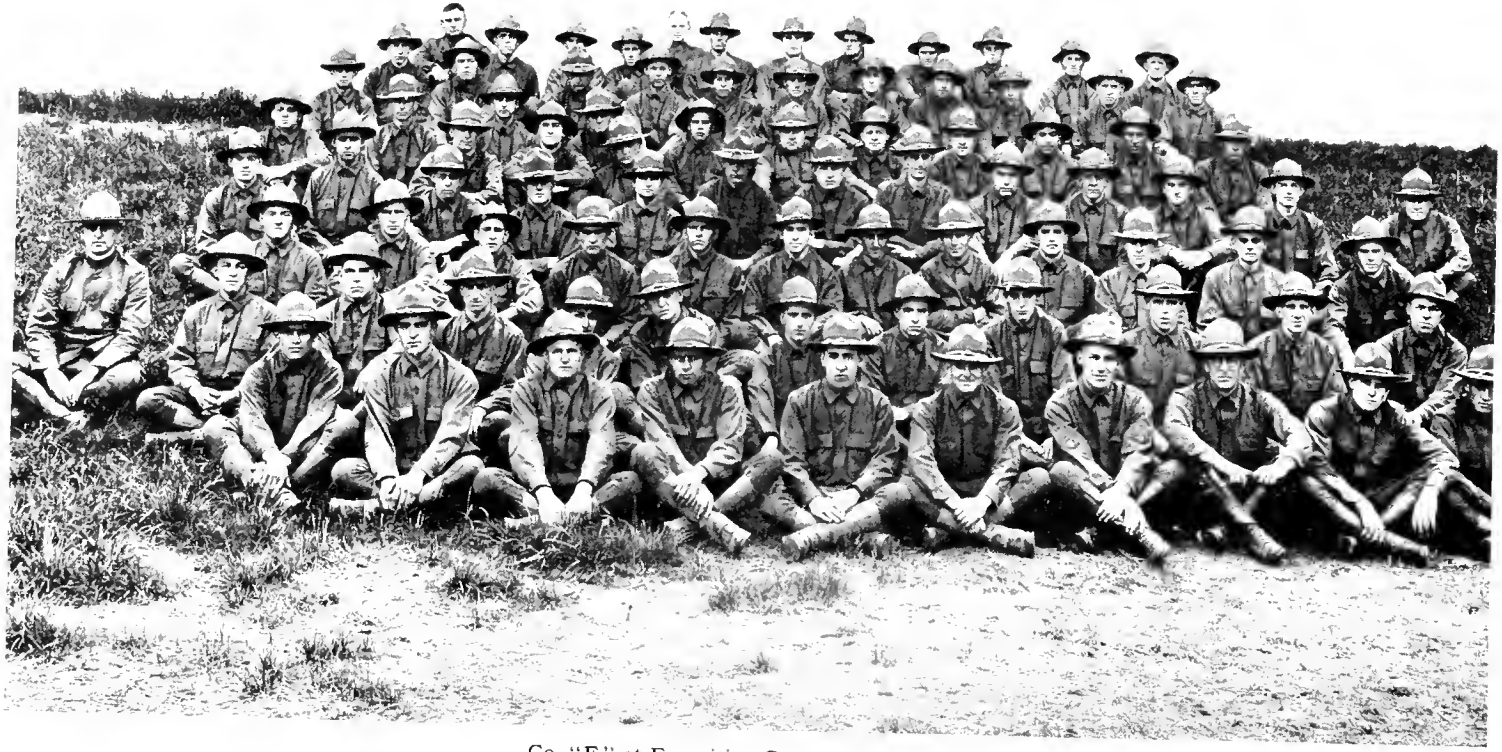
commandeered French shops in order to provide tools for the construction of telephone lines; and kept not only his organization supplied with provisions and materials but also, on occasions, other units supplied with signal equipment.

It was not long before the Saturday afternoon drills began to show results. As the raw recruits became well drilled soldiers, the subject for discussion was, naturally, the work which the Battalion might be called upon to do. The commanding officer of the organization was Major James W. Hubbell, who had had fifteen years' experience with the Telephone Company, eleven years with the New York National Guard, during three years of which he was a commissioned officer, and two years with the Pennsylvania Cavalry. During the period of weekly drills the Major made frequent trips to New York to learn all that he could which would enable him to keep his Battalion ahead of the game.

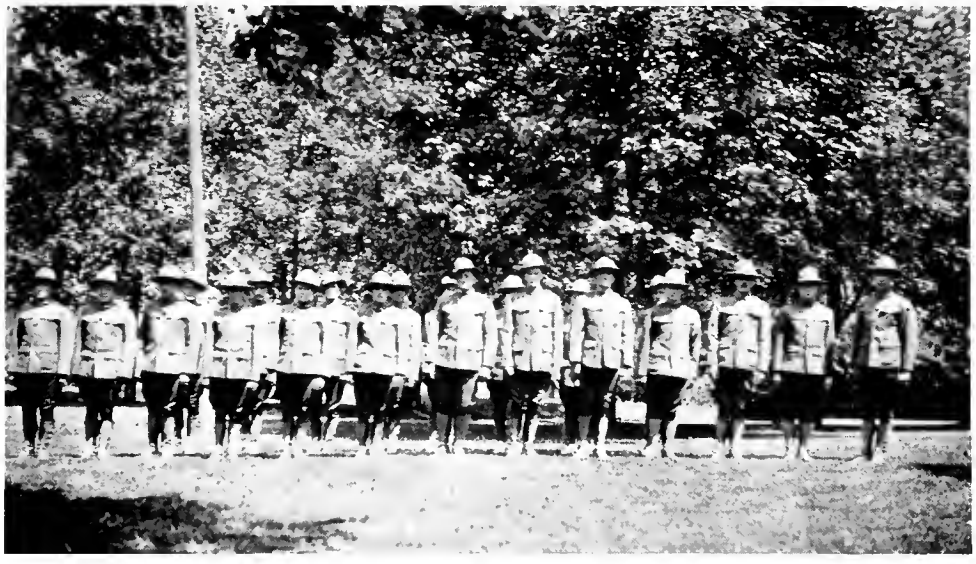
On May twenty-second he was called to Washington. Colonel Russell had been appointed Chief Signal Officer of the American Expeditionary Forces, and expected in a few days to accompany General Pershing to France. He desired a great amount of information concerning the apparatus and tools required for the construction of various hypothetical lines in France and wanted it immediately. Major Hubbell gathered all the data available and



Co. "D's" Detachment at Museum Field, Philadelphia



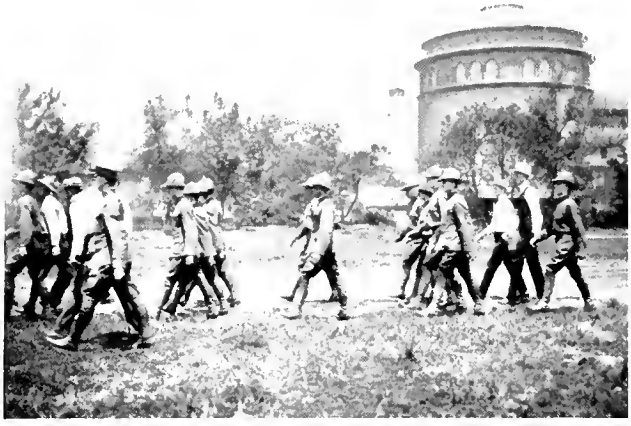
Co. "E" at Exposition Grounds, Pittsburgh



Harrisburg Detachment Drilling on the "Island"

returned to Philadelphia, where for two days and a night the Engineering Department of The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania worked unceasingly on the preparation of a general requisition to cover the material. On the twenty-fourth the Major took the requisition to Washington. The papers called for an expenditure so far in excess of any amount of which the Signal Corps had ever dreamed, that it could not be approved without investigation. A cable inquiry brought information from Paris that the French systems could readily furnish "all of the communication facilities required." This caused the requisition to be considerably cut down, with the result that after the Battalion landed in France, Supply Officer Meigs was given many sleepless nights and hard days' work getting together the tools and equipment necessary for stringing the lines of communication.

It was while at Washington that Major Hubbell learned that his Battalion was likely to land in France much earlier than any of its members then expected. He suggested that if it were so, it might be well to have certain representatives precede the main body so that the preliminary survey work might be completed in advance, and that actual construction work might start immediately upon the arrival of the Battalion. The number of persons to accompany the first convoy had been rigidly limited by General Pershing, but on May twenty-fifth permission was secured to allow Lieutenants Repp and Glaspey, and Battalion Supply Sergeant Quinby who spoke French fluently, to accompany the expedition. That this was a wise selection may be attested from the fact that at the signing of the Armistice, Repp was a Lieu-



"Rookies" at Museum Field, Philadelphia

tenant-Colonel and had been appointed Chief Signal Officer of the Advance Section, Services of Supply; that at the time of his most unfortunate death at Toul, on November fifth, 1918, Glaspey was a Major; and that Quinby, having acted as interpreter for General Pershing's staff, was later commissioned as First Lieutenant and assigned to the Intelligence Section of the General Staff.

Late in May the need for outdoor drill was sensed, and the Pittsburgh company secured the use of the large field at the Pittsburgh Exposition grounds, where Lieutenant Suddath put the men through their paces; the Harrisburg section used the "Island," and the Philadelphia section used Museum Field at the University of Pennsylvania. These week-end drills became centers of interest for many telephone officials. Captain "Joe" Francis, Engineer of Appraisals and a former Guardsman, helped to instruct the rookies, and his patience and painstaking efforts contributed greatly to the marvelous progress made at Museum Field. In an effort to take advantage of the most valuable training possible, certain of the more experienced instrument men were placed in various test rooms of the Long Distance Company, so they might gain practice in handling a great variety of equipment; men who were familiar with telegraph codes were taken into the Western Union Telegraph Company operating rooms, where they were given intensive training; Farrington, Dailey, Smithoover and Davis

Capt. "Joe" Francis Gives a Lesson

were dispatched to the School for Army Cooks at Fort Wood; truck drivers were "farmed out" to various truck repair stations; and clerical men were relieved from their office duties and put out on the lines with construction gangs.

Learning to Read Wig-Wag

During the second week in June, information was received that the Battalion might soon be called into service, and the work of preparation became more feverish. All were excused from further telephone duty and taken out into the country for daily hikes and drills.

Each man was urged to make a will, and aid was also given to each in arranging his business affairs, as no one could foresee where this great adventure might lead.

Chapter III

They're Off!

THE time had come when home ties must be broken. It was a beautiful Sunday, that seventeenth day of June, when the Company "E" men at Pittsburgh said their farewells. They were dined by their Bell comrades, then marched through the streets in the fading light of the setting sun to the station, and soon were speeding toward Philadelphia on their way to camp in New Jersey. A stop at Greensburg gave the telephone people and other friends in that city an opportunity to express their farewells and to turn over to the men of the Battalion baskets filled with "eats" to help lighten the journey. Lieutenant "Long John" Suddath was a military man from his hat to his shoes. As the train was rounding Horseshoe Curve at 9:30 he summoned Bugler Fest: "You man, you're in the Army now! Don't you know that a soldier can't go to sleep without taps? Get out that horn and get busy!"

On that same evening the Harrisburg section, too, marched to the station and amid songs and cheers and surrounded by relatives and friends, started on their journey to the same destination.

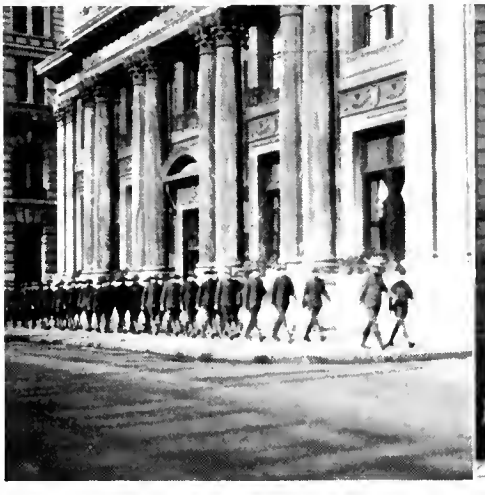
The Harrisburg men upon their arrival in Philadelphia were quartered in the Museum Barracks over night. At 5:30 in the morning Company "E" reached Philadelphia and the men were soon splashing around in a large swimming pool where the fatigue of the all-night journey was quickly forgotten.

The Telephone Company's officials invited the Battalion to breakfast at the Union League, and as the Pittsburgh and Harrisburg men with the Philadelphia section assembled, they had the first opportunity to see their future comrades. In urging all to do their best in drills, Major Hubbell had been

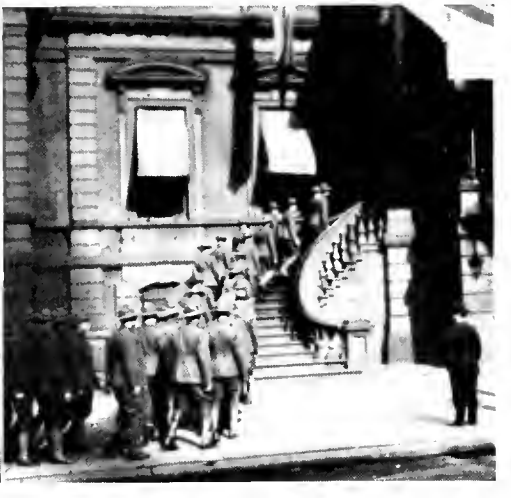
reporting to each Company the progress of the other. It was interesting that morning to watch the men "sizing up" their fellows—and at the same time striving to maintain a military bearing intended to impress the other members of the Battalion. Any one attending the Battalion mess a few months later might well come to the conclusion that its members had become considerably better acquainted.

"Good-bye, Harrisburg"

When the meal was over there was a short period of fraternizing, of getting better acquainted. Telephone officials who were to run the jobs at home, proudly and soberly encouraged the men who were bound for France. Assembly was sounded and the Battalion was formed in a hollow square in the historic Union League Assembly Hall. Behind the khaki-clad men were groups of civilians, silent and with shining eyes. The room was so still that one could almost hear the breeze which stirred, high up on the wall, the blue silk standard that had been carried during the Lincoln presidential campaign and with it, one which had flown over the Gettysburg encampment at the semi-centennial of that great battle, when the men from the two old armies met and exchanged salutes on the field where they had once been in terrible combat.



Co. "E" in Philadelphia



Entering Union League

Mr. Kinnard advanced to the center of the room. He was deeply moved as he spoke:

"Men of the First Battalion, Signal Reserve Corps: This is not a blue Monday; it's a Red, White and Blue Monday. I am here not as an executive of your Company and mine; I am here as one of the gang, please, who has climbed a pole, dug a hole, made a cable splice, installed an instrument—here representing the seventeen thousand odd of the men and women, boys and girls—your fellow-workers.

"To be selected for this task and in this capacity is particularly pleasing and gratifying to me.

"You men composing this Battalion have been chosen from those of your fellows because of your particular fitness for the tasks to be assigned to you in connection with the Signal Corps of the Army of the United States. To be selected as you were is a very high honor; a real obligation goes with this honor that I have not the slightest doubt you will very creditably discharge. The training you have had particularly fits you for this branch of the military service; the army training you will have is going to bring you back to civic life better qualified as telephone men and, I trust, even better citizens.

"The good wishes, love and affection of your fellow-workers in the Pennsylvania group are yours. We shall have a very real pride in all that you will do; and at no stage of your undertaking should

Breakfast at Union League

you have occasion to feel that you are not supported by the cheers and prayers of the crowd who will have to stay home because you were the best fitted to go.

"Military duty demands absolute obedience and discipline. You have been loyal employees; your volunteering for this service is only another evidence of that loyalty. While absolute discipline would be insisted upon—which is the way of the Army—I ask that it be given most cheerfully and voluntarily. Conscientious thought was given to the selection of your officers. It was no mean job to pick men best qualified not only in a technical telephone sense, but also best qualified to care for the health and welfare of this body of men while in the field. Following strictly what they order and suggest will mean health, happiness and honor, and I am sure a thoroughly merited 'Well done!' from the citizenship of the country whom you go out to serve.

"The men and women who have been associated with you, jealous of the privilege of presenting your Battalion colors, have asked me, in their names, to make this presentation. Unfortunately the battle flags are not ready for delivery, but will catch up with you in a few weeks—two silk guidons, one American flag, and your Battalion standard. I have here for presentation two bunting guidons and your bunting American flag—the gift of your Company associates.

"I like to think that they symbolize an ideal—the high conception which your fellow-employees, in common with you, hold of your duty. In civil life it was your ideal that no service should be more prompt, more efficient, more unselfishly, and more cheerfully given than the service rendered to the public by your Company. It has been our habit not to be content to play second to any in our performance. Carry these ideals with you—always having in mind the importance of the function you are performing. Let it guide you in your construction of signal service lines and in their maintenance so that they will, as nearly as is humanly possible, be in condition to carry the messages that are so essential to the successful conduct of this great campaign, always having in mind that the reasons which inspired your country to engage in this conflict were of the highest type; that no self-seeking on the part of your country is responsible for its participation; no extending of territorial boundries; no indemnities; no seeking to increase its importance among the world's nations other than for good; but that our participation, as in all our previous wars, is due to the real sense of duty we owe to civilization and the extending and maintaining of the personal liberty which we hold to be the right of each individual.

"Keeping these things in mind, acting as we know you will act, our salutation to your flag will be second only to that accorded to the Stars and Stripes."

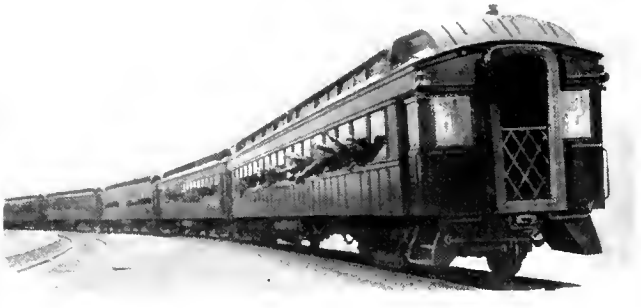
Major Hubbell, accepting the standards, turned them over to the Color Guard, and the band played the National Anthem.

Down Market Street, Philadelphia

There was no applause. There was a feeling in the heart of each one present which could not be safely entrusted to expression. The silence was most impressive.

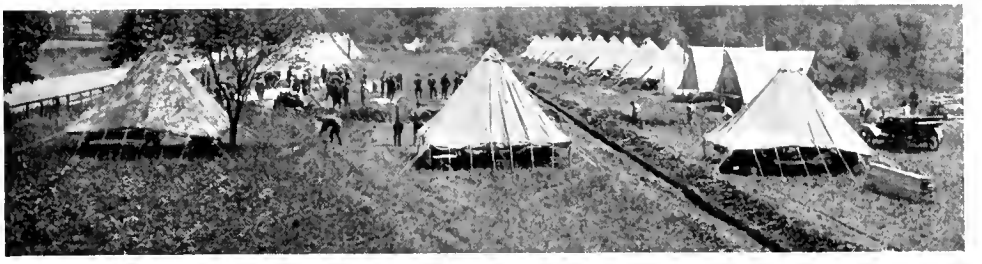
A messenger boy advanced toward the Major with two boxes. These contained sums which had been contributed by the employees remaining at home, to provide for the many emergency expenses which might be encountered while the two Companies were in the service.

Immediately after the assembly broke up, the Battalion formed on Broad Street. Farewells had been said and few of the soldiers expected again to see their relatives and friends until the big work had been finished. The column swung around City Hall and down Market Street like an organization of veterans. At Independence Hall a short stop was made so that the first Battalion photograph might be made in the shadow of that historic building. Then the march to the ferry was resumed.



They're Off!

Well-wishers crowded the narrow platform in the Camden station as the men entered the train. Outstretched hands were gripped from the car windows. There were few dry eyes as the band played its parting airs. The train pulled slowly out of the station. Arms and hats were waving as a token of farewell. The cars rounded a curve and the crowd at the station passed out of sight. The First Battalion was on its way!



CHAPTER IV

Monmouth Park

IT WAS but a short ride to the camp at Monmouth Park where the Battalion was to undergo intensive training for overseas service. The inspiring exercises of the morning at Union League and the cheering crowds along the march and at the station seemed to have their effect on the feelings of the men. They swung into the camp with such snap and military bearing as not only to fill their own officers with pride but to create a deep impression upon the "regulars" who were waiting to receive them.

Tents had already been pitched, but in and around them was a thick tangle of briers and poison ivy. As soon as cots, bed sacks, and mess equipment had been furnished by the supply detachment, mess was served. After a strenuous afternoon spent in cutting down the briers and ivy, the toilers were ready early to try out their new sleeping quarters, vowing vengeance upon the Germans, whom they held responsible for aching backs and blistered hands. A little later Jones received permission to visit his home and he was eloquent in describing these duties at camp. One of his friends became incensed that a soldier had to do such menial labor and made the very pertinent remark: "I should think the Government would hire men to do that kind of work!"

The training at this camp was under the general supervision of Lieutenants Milliken and Corlett, who were, respectively, the Adjutant and Executive Officer of the camp, representing the Signal Office of the Eastern Department. In direct charge of the First Battalion were Captains Streider and Whitworth. These men, all of whom had seen long service in the Signal Corps of the Regular Army and were now holding commissions in the Reserve Corps, were most helpful in completing the transition to a smoothly-working military organization. Regular drills were started that first Tuesday morning bright and early, the programs having been outlined at various officers' meetings on Monday evening.

Monmouth Park which afterward became a famous Signal Corps Camp, known as Camp Alfred Vail, was originally a race course and had had very little use for probably twenty years. Portions of the track were cultivated as truck patches, but the most of it was overgrown. Plans had already been completed for the erection of a number of barracks, and all of the available men from the First and Second Reserve Telegraph Battalions (the Second Battalion was organized from employees of the New York Telephone Company) were kept at work each afternoon clearing up the grounds so that construction might start.

Lumber had begun to arrive for the new barracks and one by one the pyramidal tents occupied by the Telegraph Battalion acquired comfortable wood floors. But the Construction Quartermaster discovered that his lumber

Playtime

piles were shrinking before any building had commenced and the "rustling" process was stopped. However, the tent colony seemed quite satisfied with its labors.

One after another cases of ivy-poison developed and about the time that the victims were recovering, inoculations against typhoid and paratyphoid and vaccinations against smallpox were heaped upon them in rapid succession.

Sunburn, ivy-poison, inoculations and vaccinations—these are the things that stand out in the memories of those who were at Monmouth Park. "Six shots in the arm and thirteen boils, while learning thirty bugle calls in two lessons, 'them were the happy days,' " as Fest put it. We must not forget to

Cleaning up the Grounds

mention the camp visits of that well-known product of New Jersey—the mosquito. Perhaps "visits" is not the right word; they seemed to make their home in the camp and apparently, from their enthusiasm, very much enjoyed their feast on these healthy red-blooded men.

At the beginning of the second week, drills throughout the entire day were called for. Immediately after morning mess, camp was thoroughly "policed," and then came the assembly call for physical exercise. A familiar sight was Lieutenant Milliken, shouting his commands from the top of a large box, while the men went through the muscle-stretching antics. Then there were long periods of infantry drill, instruction in guard duty and military courtesy, and the reading of the "Articles of War" to small groups, There were also problems in map reading, and regularly the First Sergeant's forces were assembled in the Adjutant's tent for instructions in the intricacies of Army "paper-work."

Lieutenant Suddath was chief instructor in guard duty, and the various guard details showed the effects of his instruction. He had so thoroughly impressed the rules upon his men that one dark, rainy night, upon his return to camp in a Ford which had been lent to the Battalion by the Telephone Company, the Lieutenant was forced to "dismount and advance to be recognized." In the middle of a puddle and in the glare of the headlight, "Suddy" straightened up his six-feet-two of indignation and thundered—"You, man! Who am I?" "Mike"—it was Scanlon who so disturbed the Lieutenant—did not argue with his preceptor. Another time Hull was sweeping around his tent when Lieutenant Suddath approached. Hull brought his broom to "present arms" without realizing what he was doing. "What do you think this is?" said Suddath. "Do you take me for an officer in some d—— broom brigade? Cut out the funny stuff!"

"Smoke"

At the beginning of the third week, Signal Corps construction problems were started, being generally developed by Captain Hollister of Company "E." Telephone lines were quickly built and as quickly recovered in all parts of the camp grounds and along the neighboring roads, and at the same time, the Battalion completely installed the telephone system for the camp headquarters.

A number of trucks were received at the camp and those familiar with motor vehicles were taken from the Battalion for a short course of instruction. At about the same time certain motorcycles were also furnished, and it became the duty of the motor sergeants to instruct every one in the organization in the operation of these treacherous conveniences. Many trees in the region surrounding the camp could tell of sudden jars due to the fact that there are times when amateur motorcycle drivers are unable to think and to act with sufficient rapidity to prevent collisions.

The program for training developed so rapidly that there were not enough hours during the day to cover all of the work required. Evening classes were started. Instructions were given in general Army practices. Still there seemed some hours of waking in which profitable instruction might be received, and a French class was begun. Lessons were given by Professor Nomberg and his wife, of New York, who were spending the summer at a nearby town and who gave each week-day evening, except Saturday, to the Signal Corps men.

Who ever heard of a military organization without a mascot? A woman tourist from Pittsburgh passed the camp and was interested to find that many of the men were from her home town. A few days later she returned with a fine little fox terrier which she presented to the Battalion. On account of a large black spot on his face and his connection with the Smoky City, the pup was promptly christened "Smoke." A friend from Daniels' home town one day brought a little collie pup which was given the name of "Bruce." Unfortunately, while boarding the transport, a large barracks bag fell on Bruce's back and the pup was so badly injured that he died. "Smoke," however, accompanied the Battalion during its work in France for over a year, but under the wheels of a motorcycle he met the fate of many military mascots. There were other mascots of a decidedly temporary nature at Monmouth Park. A young crow adopted one of the members of Company "D," and was at first a very genteel and orderly bird, but before long became a confirmed collector of pipes and other small articles belonging to the soldiers. "Jim" resented the punishment which was the reward for his thievery, and finally left the Battalion, as did a pretty little blue sparrow-hawk which condescended to live in the camp for two or three weeks.

From time to time various officials of the Telephone Company came to the camp to see the boys and note the development of the Battalion. Only a few

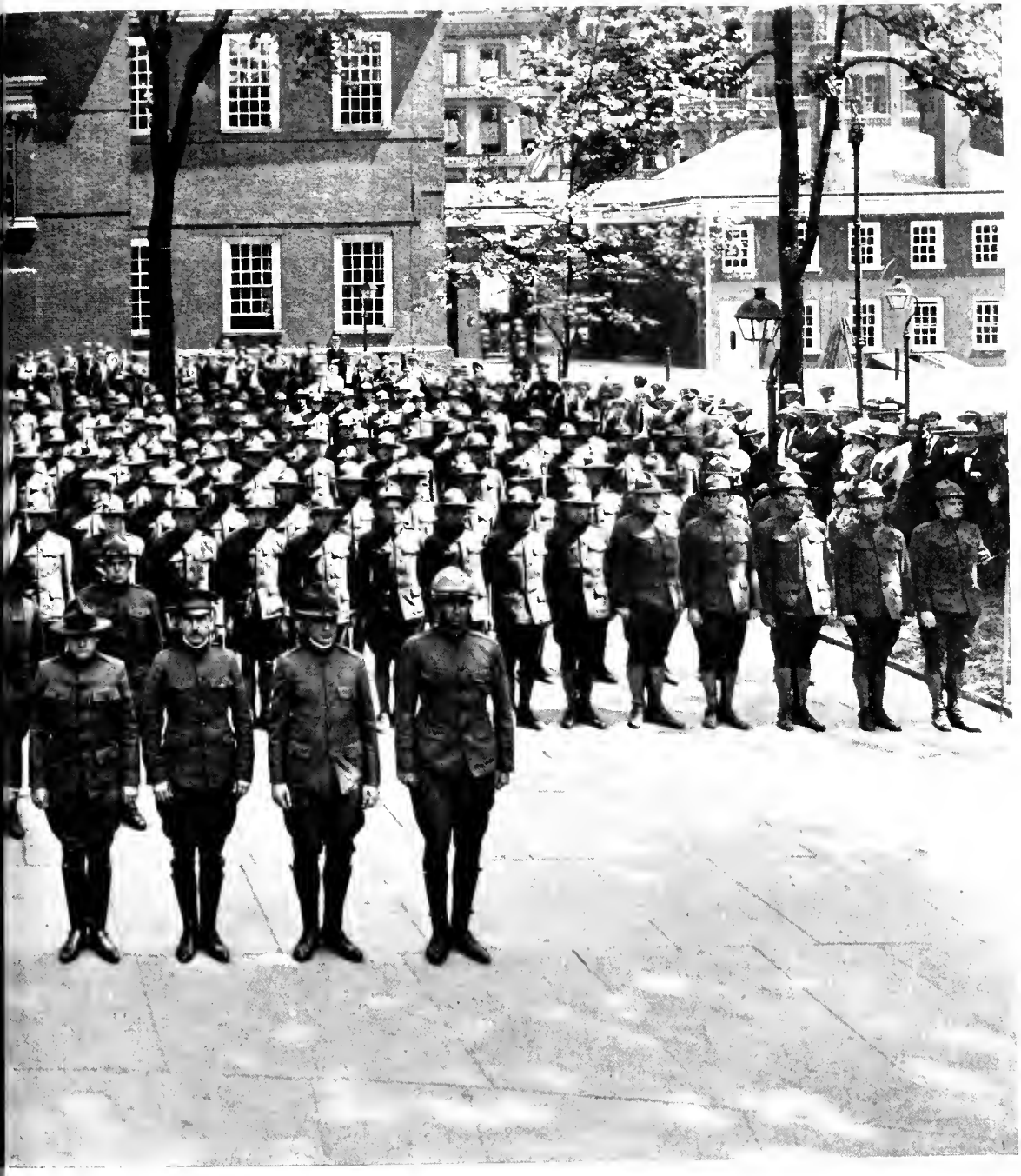
THE OFFICERS

Back Row Lieut. Fielding P. Meigs; Lieut. Douglas Macfarlan; Lieut. Wm. F. Gauss; Lieut. Leroy N. Suddath

Front Row—Lieut. Thomas H. Griest; Capt. Roy C. Hollister; Maj. James W. Hubbell; Capt. Wm. P. Wattles

FIRST PICTURE (

Independence l



THE BATTALION

June 18, 1917

ROSTER

FIRST TELEGRAPH BATTALION—SIGNAL CORPS U S R

June 18 1917

MAJOR JAMES W HUBBELL, Signal Corps
U S R, Commanding

1st LIEUT THOMAS H GRIEST, Signal Corps
U S R, Adjutant

HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT SERGEANT
(FIRST CLASS)
(DET BN SGT MAJOR)
Bradford, William

PRIVATES
Cannon, James F, Jr
McIlhenny, Eugene V
McKee, Llewelyn T, Jr

1st LIEUT FIELDING P MEIGS, Signal Corps
U S R, Supply Officer

BATTALION SUPPLY DETACHMENT
SERGEANT
Quinby, William F

PRIVATES (FIRST CLASS)
Lyons, John F, Jr
Magill, Robert A
Seymour, Charles
Thorp, Benjamin S, Jr

COMPANY "D"

CAPTAIN WILLIAM P WATTLES

1st LIEUT WILLIAM F REPP

1st LIEUT REXFORD M GLASPEY

MASTER SIGNAL ELECTRICIANS
Brittain, William W
Hasskarl, Victor L C

SERGEANT (FIRST CLASS)
Price, Shirley C

SERGEANTS
Coates, Albert
Engstrom, John D
Farrington, Joseph D (Det Mess Sgt)
Lutz, Frederick (Det Sup Sgt)
Jensen, Harry
Miller, Calvin E
Murdaugh, Burton D
Spears, Albert F
Winston, Thomas H

CORPORALS
Buehler, Martin, 2nd
Cowan, Henry B
Favinger, Harry W
Grant, Duncan J
Hannam, Edward T
Kraus, Paul T
Longo, Valentine
Pemberton, Walter L
Ricciardi, Salvatore D
Woodward, George D

HORSESHOER
Uffler, Robert I

COOKS
Dailey, Willard W
Tomlinson, Thomas

PRIVATES

Alber, Chas E
Althouse, Charles E
Armstrong, John D
Bierbrauer, M A
Bigham, Samuel J
Bole, Howard C
Brautigt, Raymond A
Bruder, Herbert J
Carlson, Harry O
Craigmile, Robert
Daniels, William J B
Dobbie, William
Dunbaugh, George A
Doyle, Richard
Erb, George K
Fennell, George F
Flaherty, W K
Forst, John J
Forwood, James M
Fullerton, Chancey
Gardiner, John F
Graham, John H, Jr
Gruninger, John, Jr
Haislop, Walter B
Hale, Charles W
Hamilton, Jerome M
Harris, Hubert
Heisler, William
Hellings, David K
Herzer, Arno E
Hollowell, John J
Howell, George B
Hume-Hamilton A
Huss, Frank E
Johnson, Charles E
Jones, Herbert H
Kiehl, John C H
Knight, Paul R
Kreider, Irving S
Lester, William J, Jr
Long, William E
MacRonald, David W
Marr, Harold G
Maurada, Frederick J
Mayer, William M
Miller, John
Miller, Myel K
Noonan, J P
Noone, John E
O Brien J V
Reuter, Harry M, Jr
Reynolds, Nowland E
Ryno, Walter W
Simmers, William C, Jr
Smith, William
Somers, Ralph J
Spangler, Henry L
Speitel, Edmond J
Stevens, Frederick H
Taylor, Henry W
Tennerson, William J
Tuttle, Ray C
Twohig, John E
Underwood, William A
Vandershee, Claude J
Walker, John
Walkup, Leopold C
Whitlock, Senon H
Worrell, Charles S

COMPANY "E"

CAPTAIN ROY C HOLLISTER

1st LIEUT WILLIAM F GAUSS

1st LIEUT LEROY N SUDDATH

MASTER SIGNAL ELECTRICIANS
Conwell, Erle McK
Foust, Luther R

SERGEANTS (FIRST CLASS)
Paterson, James B
Dickson, William M

SERGEANTS
Adams, Wm J
Collins, Charles H
Keyes, Earl S
Klingensmith, John F
Lowe, Charles C
Russell, Clyde L
Smithoover, Jacob F (Mess Sgt)
Vance, Clarence B (Sup Sgt)

CORPORALS
Beck, George A
Cavanaugh, Edward J
Danley, Charles W
Gaghigen, Jesse A
Gretzler, Walter J
Hackett, David McC
Lowstetter, Harry A
McAnallen, John D
McKinney, Ollie H
Mann, Timothy J
Mumford, Edw H

HORSESHOER
Graber, Charles F

COOKS
Davis, Wallie
Gasser, Harry W

PRIVATES

Barr, John F
Barto, Raphael C
Beck, Wm J
Bielstein, Carl W
Bogner, William J
Bohn, Herman A
Burns, Joseph E
Callahan, Patrick J
Custard, Herbert C
Custer, Albert L
Dilks, Franklin E
Drew, Clifford H
Echard, Ephraim McC.
Evans, Harold J
Fest, August J
Gallo, Tony
Gaus, Joseph C
Geib, Willard F
George, William C
Giles, Howard E
Green, Charles J
Halligren, Leif H
Henk, Howard F
Hoover, Thomas E.
Hough, Charles A
Hutchinson, Clarence M.
Johnson, John A
Johnson, Thomas W
King, Harold M
King, Vinton P
Lewis, Archie L
Lindley, Hiram V
Lobaugh, Ford
Logsdon, Earl A
Maloney, Frederick
Mohr, Edw P
Morcom, Myles M.
McCann, Alfred E.
McCann, Chauncey
McDonald, Raymond J.
McKinney, John L.
O Brien, James D
Rauenswinder, Ralph C
Reid, George D
Richards, Ernest
Riley, Francis C
Rohr, Edward C
Scanlon, Michael J
Schmitt, Fred J
Sebring, Glen
Seybert, Roy
Shaffer, Leo F
Sherman, William H.
Shintessel, John
Stille, Harry C
Thompson, Leslie E
Westfall, Frank B
Williams, Miller
Yeckel, Clarence E.
Young, Harry C

of the more rugged of the officials, however, were willing to chance an overnight stay with the soldiers. Upon one such occasion Mr. Kinnard, who was accompanied by P. C. Staples, Publicity Manager, later Vice-President of the Bell Company, and Frank Wisse, Editor of "The Telephone News," decided to

The Men were Proud of their "Housewives"

Camp Pets

accept a very pressing invitation to spend the night in camp. Before the guests retired to their beds of straw which Lieutenant Meigs had supplied, the latter displayed a snake which he claimed to have found in the straw—casually remarking that he did not know how many others there might be in the bed sacks. Evidently Lieutenant Meigs was not taken seriously, for the guests were out bright and early to follow all of the military activities. Mr. Kinnard vowed that he had had a good night's rest, but Mr. Staples and Mr. Wisse were more critical of their alleged comforts. Upon another occasion, "Boss"

Above—A Halt for a Drink from the Water Wagon
Lower left—Amateur Cooks Lower right—On a Hike

Badger came in from Pittsburgh, and during that week-end no one could have driven him away from his "gang."

The silk standards which had been promised were now finished, and on July twenty-third Mr. Kinnard and his staff again graced the officers' mess with their presence, seemingly enjoying the pork and beans which Farrington and his crowd had prepared. In the party were J. C. Lynch, later Vice-President and General Manager, and Mr. Staples. The Battalion was assembled. Mr. Kinnard tried to speak, but was overcome by emotion at the thought of the impending departure of his "boys." Words failed him and he silently turned over the beautiful standards to Major Hubbell.

July was a rainy month and spirits were rather low, but toward the end of the month the weather again became very hot. During this warm spell Lieutenant Meigs obtained overcoats, winter caps, aretics, and other heavy

apparel. No one who has not done it can imagine the misery, on an extremely hot day, of trying to fit overcoats, either in the boiling sun or in a hot, crowded tent. "Jeff" Adams, however, seemed to take kindly to the winter equipment and for a few days, except when at drills, wore his winter cap solemnly around the sun-baked park. Twohig kicked about the fit of his shoes. Thorpe, Meigs' right-hand man, investigated and, feeling of them, said that they fitted very well. Thereupon Twohig removed one of the shoes and showed that he had on his civilian shoes underneath! Thorpe had to admit that the complaint was justified.

The latter part of July brought the last physical examinations and took from the Battalion eleven men, including "Big" Hollister, Company "E's" Captain. This was a severe blow, both to the Battalion and to the men who were forced to withdraw. Many of the latter sought afterward to enter the service with other organizations, Sommers, from Atlantic City, even submitting to an operation before finally being accepted for service in another signal unit. The greatest loss was Captain Hollister—a telephone construction man of years of experience and extremely well fitted to meet the supreme test of military capacity—the test of leadership. His loss was deeply felt by all of the men in the Battalion.

Captain Hollister's removal made it necessary to look for another officer. Major Hubbell pleaded with the authorities to have the Company proceed under Lieutenant Gauss. Permission was granted to have the Company temporarily commanded by a Lieutenant but, because of serious vacancies already existing in the officers' personnel, due to Lieutenants Repp and Glaspey being already in France, Major Hubbell was ordered to select a Lieutenant from the training Battalion then in camp. With the help of Captains Streider and Whitworth, who had by this time been permanently taken from the Battalion and made instructors in the Officers' School, Major Hubbell selected Lieutenant Cecil V. Lawrence, formerly with the New England Telephone Company at Bangor, Maine. This subsequently proved a fortunate choice.

Shortly after the Officers' Instruction School had been established, Major Hubbell was given permission to recommend one technical man from the Battalion for a commission. Sergeant Winston of Company "D" was selected and became a Lieutenant. He reached France, via England, in November, 1917, with the 408th Telegraph Battalion, becoming Captain in the following July and Major in April, 1919.

Throughout July there were rumors of departure for France, and as the month drew toward its close many events indicated that there was fair foundation for these reports. The officials of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company had shown great interest in the camp during their numerous visits. On July twenty-fifth, the President, Theodore N. Vail, with U. N. Bethell, N. C. Kingsbury, N. T. Guernsey and Major J. J. Carty, all members of

Mr. Kinnard Presents the Standards and Guidons

Mr. Vail Calls and Says Good-bye

his staff, came to the camp to bid the First and Second Reserve Battalions farewell. The Battalions passed in review before Mr. Vail and Colonel Hartman, the camp commander. Then the men were formed in a square. Colonel Hartman introduced Mr. Vail to the military offspring from his telephone organization and as the venerable President advanced, his emotion was quite evident. He felt the deep significance of this occasion when he was to have the last word with the men before they left to take up their important work on foreign soil. When he regained control of his feelings he spoke:

> 'Boys, I have come down to say good-bye before you go. You have transferred the allegiance, intelligence and faithfulness you have shown to our Company and your Company, and, in so far as you put these into your service for your country and our country, you will earn all the commendation any one can give you. You must all do your best—not comparative, good, better, best—but your very best. It is not comparative, it is relative, and relative to each of you, and you must make it relative to your opportunities, your abilities, your training and everything else.
>
> "I wish you all success, and hope to meet you again in no distant future, and wish you all the good things that are coming, and a safe return."

Departure seemed imminent. The Battalion still needed twenty telegraph operators, and no medical detachment had been provided. Captain Hollister, who had remained at camp to render any service possible, was

dispatched to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to line up the final recruiting, and on August fifth the new men arrived. They were:

Edmond J. Atwood
Leon O. Bailey
Albert Banholzer
John A. Dwyer
William C. Geddling
Frank W. Hull
Barney Kayser
Jacob Kline
John M. Koser
Charles P. Leasure
Joseph T. Lord
Esten C. McCrery
Almond D. McKay
Herbert S. McNichol
Ralph B. Parke
Allan M. Peterson
William C. Pfefferle
Vincent P. Roach
John D. Ross
Alvin C. Sherrill
John J. Smith
William T. Smith
Gaston Theriot
Horace B. Welk
Thomas Worrall

Medical Detachment

1st Lieut. Douglas Macfarlan
John A. Brown
John Boyd
Pasquale J. Cagnina
Frederic H. Gloor
Nicholas H. Kilroy
John Lister

Four others, Harry F. Devlin, Paul A. J. Henry, John K. Maxwell and Emmett Moss reached the boat on the seventh, little more than an hour before it left the dock. For the next two days the way for these "rookies" was a hard one. During their waking hours they were either worked nigh to death by Lieutenant Suddath's intense drilling, as he attempted to whip them into the finest possible shape, or were rushed around the camp by Lieutenant Meigs as he tried to complete their equipment.

Throughout the stay at Monmouth Park, and particularly during the final rush of preparing to depart, the Supply Officer, with Magill, Thorp, Gardiner, Lyons and Seymour, and ably assisted by Stille and Sebring, were probably the hardest toiling men in the outfit. These assistants were well advertised by having their names thundered from the Supply Officer's tent almost every minute of the day. In the contest of wits with Lieutenant Decker, Lieutenant Meigs met a worthy foe, but no complexity of routines nor restrictions of red tape could prevent him from steadily increasing his stock of supplies to fit out the new recruits. By threats, cajolings and general persuasiveness he secured what he needed from Lieutenant Decker, who probably spent many weary hours afterward attempting to square himself with his conscience and the records.

All of the men, to their gratification, were allowed to make week-end trips home, and August sixth found every one working with the knowledge that it

was to be the last day on American soil for a long time. Lieutenant Macfarlan, who had just arrived, built up his medical detachment. Major Hubbell scurried everywhere to see that his orders were in proper shape. Lieutenant Griest kept Sergeant Bradford busy with the reports and records.

By three o'clock the next morning mess had been finished, and all of the surplus equipment turned back to the Camp Quartermaster. In the many months of service which followed, there were numberless movings but none such as this. Everything that was of no value was put in one huge pile and, with the straw from bed-sacks, was burned, making a huge camp fire. In the flickering light from the fire the Battalion formed and marched down to board the train at Little Silver Station. The touch of humor in this name "Little Silver" was brought home each pay day.

Above—Packing up at Monmouth Park
Center left—Loading up Center right—Rookies
Below—Flags on Board the Ferry

The train was speeding toward "an Atlantic Port" and all were indulging in serious thoughts as the sun began to rise over the Jersey meadows. This was the real beginning of the great adventure. What would the sea trip be like? Few had had the experience of ocean travel. Would the dreaded submarines "get" the ship? How would they manage to operate in a strange country, and just how much actual fighting would they see? What would happen to the people at home while they were away? These reveries ended as the train pulled into Jersey City, and all were quickly directed to a waiting ferry boat which departed immediately for Hoboken. In these early troop movements everything was done to prevent publicity, but workers on passing boats readily recognized the soldiers and gave them many rousing cheers.

At the pier there was little time for thought—all was action. Up one pier and down another they marched, until at last they filed up the gang plank of the transport "Antilles," and the First Telegraph Battalion, Signal Reserve Corps, had embarked for foreign service.

CHAPTER V

Dodging Submarines

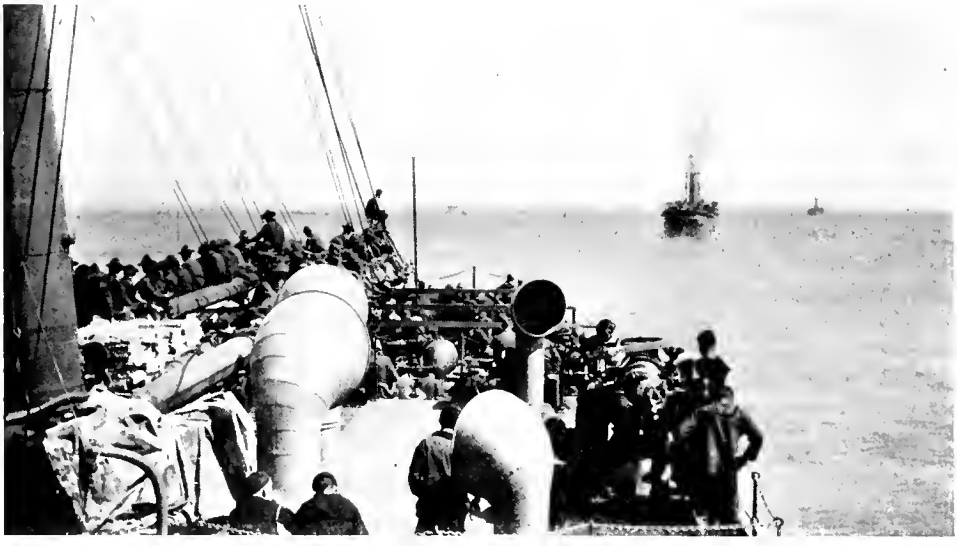
THE "Antilles," before the war, was a Southern Pacific liner, designed to carry bananas and other fruits. She was not built with an eye to comfort as a troop ship. Crowded on board with the First and Second Reserve Telegraph Battalions were an Ambulance Battalion, an Ammunition Train, and a Trench Mortar Battery. Despite the congestion, however, the troops settled down and had an opportunity to ponder over the submarine situation. Many a furtive glance was cast toward the lifeboats and other safety apparatus.

At 1:30 p.m., August seventh, the good ship left the pier and started down the river. All troops were ordered to keep out of sight and this rule aroused little enthusiasm, for it prevented many who had never been there before from enjoying a glimpse of New York Harbor and the skyline of lower Manhattan. No soldiers were visible on the boat, yet passing vessels seemed to sense that it was a troop ship. They blew their whistles and the band of an excursion boat stopped playing its ragtime and struck up "Good-Bye, Good Luck, God Bless You."

A short trip brought the "Antilles" to the rendezvous, Gravesend Bay, and the troops were then allowed on deck. Other ships were gathering to form the convoy. The afternoon was spent in shifting the men around and making them as comfortable as their cramped quarters would permit.

It was decided that the Artillery troops would furnish the ship's guard and the Signal troops the watch, this latter being the lookout and under the super-

vision of the Navy. Captain "Bill" Wattles was made commanding officer of the watch, but before he had completed his schedule for the first night, darkness had settled on the bay and, as no lights were allowed, it was impossible to locate the stateroom list of officers whom he could put on duty. As a result, he had to spend most of the night acting as officer on all watches.



Plowing Steadily Eastward

Daylight brought a surprise to most of the men on board. At 10 o'clock on the previous evening anchor had been lifted, and the convoy had stolen noiselessly out of the harbor. So quietly had the departure been managed, that the troops on board were unaware of it until daylight showed them the sea on all sides, as the ships plowed their way steadily eastward.

Morning gave the officer of the watch an opportunity to organize his forces. The horizon was divided into sixteen parts and sixteen men were assigned, each to keep his eyes on his particular sector. Four men were assigned to each of the two crows' nests. These eight men divided the sea into eight sectors—each man to keep his eyes on the part assigned to him. By this means every visible portion of the sea was covered by two pairs of eyes.

The convoy, steaming quietly ahead, was impressively calm and businesslike. The big ships were in column with the "Finland" first, then the "Antilles," "Lenape," "San Jacinto" and "Henderson." Far out in the lead was their watch dog, the battleship "Montana," and out on either flank the destroyers "Monahan" and "Jewett."

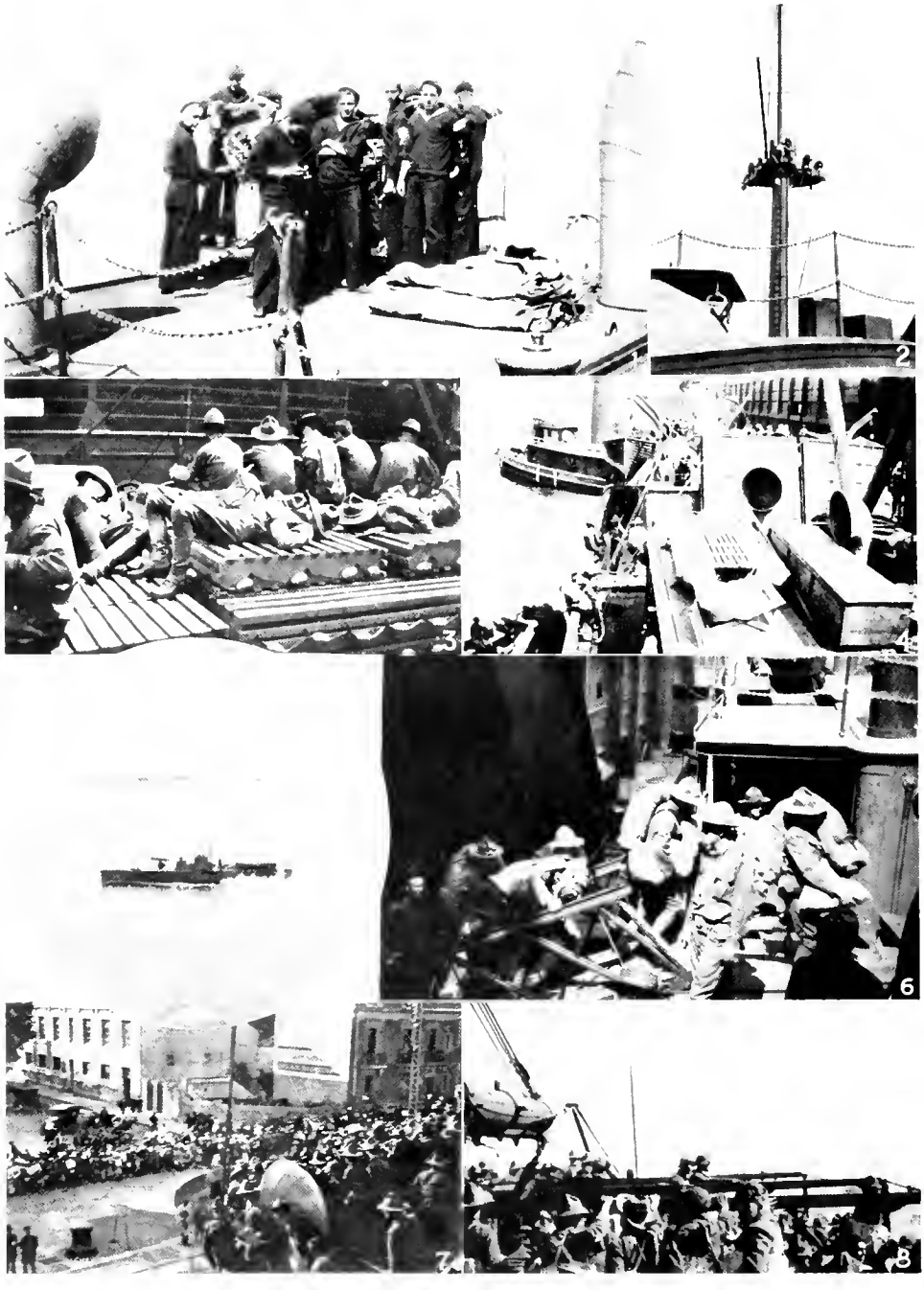
From the beginning there was the usual grumbling about the food and quarters. An occasional entertainment in the evening behind blanketed win-

dows helped to break the monotony. A quartet from Company "E," Hough, Sebring, Stille and Williams, made a hit and Dobbie, of Company "D," with his Scotch dialect stories, was the star comedian. Tom Longboat, the famous Indian long distance runner, gave the audience an account of his experiences with the Canadians at Ypres.

On the night of the fifteenth storm clouds began to gather, and in the inky blackness every eye was strained to keep track of the other ships. About midnight the storm broke. Navy officers aboard admitted that it was quite a squall. The "landlubbers," however, considered it a very real storm. Throughout the next day it rained and the night again settled black and blowing and raining. Clouds began to lift about midnight and a light ahead proved to be on the "Montana." The convoy had become separated and the "Montana" had taken a chance and displayed a small light in the hope of helping the wandering vessels to reassemble. The entire convoy did not reform until some time the next forenoon, all the ships having become scattered and having plowed through the storm toward the rendezvous appointed for the morning of the seventeenth.

At noon on the seventeenth a fleet of six destroyers came out of the East to meet the convoy, and the "Montana" with the two destroyers disappeared into the West. The new destroyers constantly circled the fleet, chasing in every direction like terriers. When a ship appeared on the horizon one of the destroyers scurried out to turn it away. That night the watch became even more alert, and all of the men were warned most seriously that they were now heading into the zone where the greatest vigilance was necessary. The fact that all of the lives on the ship depended on this watchfulness was most thoroughly impressed upon their minds. All were required to sleep in their clothes, having life preservers and other paraphernalia beside them so they could answer an "abandon ship" call in a moment.

The navy officers were splendid men, as was the ship's master, who had been its captain when it was a peaceful freighter. All of these were particularly proud of the construction of the "Antilles," vowing that she could not possibly sink even if torpedoed. This, together with the fact that so far all had gone well, fostered a feeling of confidence. At noon, Sunday the nineteenth, the alarm whistle of a nearby boat suddenly was sounded and the "Antilles" gave a lurch as she was turned quickly out of her course. All immediately rushed to the decks with their life preservers. Although the destroyers raced wildly around the fleet, and all of the boats zigzagged, nothing developed. It was reported that a torpedo had passed near the bow of a destroyer. Some depth bombs were dropped without apparent effect, and after a time the convoy settled down into a state of semi-calm to await the next excitement. Twice during the afternoon the gunners were again signaled to their posts but nothing serious happened. At daylight on the twentieth,



1—One of the Gun Crews 2—A Crow's Nest 3—"The Most Popular Sport"
4—Pulling Away from the Dock 5—A Sub-chaser, the French Coast in the Distance
6—Boarding the "Antilles" 7—Arrival at St. Nazaire 8—During the Submarine Excitement

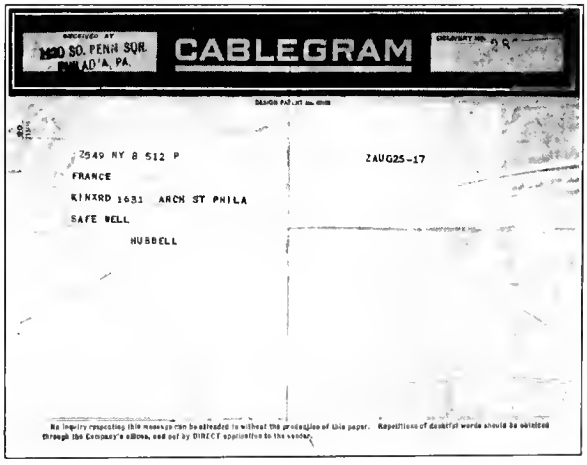
SNAPPED ON THE WAY OVER

the watch sighted fleets of small fishing vessels with their charming weather-stained sails of red and yellow and blue.

Suddenly, about eight o'clock, just as Belle Isle was sighted and all were feeling happy because the journey was nearing an end, came a shot from one of the destroyers. There was a rush to the guns. Shot after shot was fired, the troops remaining on deck in their life belts. Two French airplanes came out from shore to render assistance. The engagement lasted more than an hour, and if any one felt any great fear he successfully concealed it. A feeling of confidence in the Navy seemed to permeate the ship.

Altogether about seventy shots were fired and ten depth bombs dropped. Just what the toll of submarines was no one knows, but the estimates varied from the conservatism of the bridge to the enthusiasm of the hold. Some said one and some said ten. The subject was still being debated as the convoy with the aid of the French pilot steamed slowly into the harbor. Everywhere were small boats with their wonderfully colored sails, the sailors waving their hats and shouting "Vive les Americaines!" Throughout the afternoon the procession continued up the harbor, the seaside cottages dotting the green hills which sloped down to the beach. About five o'clock, amid enthusiastic throngs of cheering Frenchmen gathered on the quay, the "Antilles" pulled into the basin at St. Nazaire. France at last!

All on board expected, of course, that they would be able, before dark, to leave the boat and have a chance to test their land legs after thirteen days at sea. But there was no such luck. They were compelled to content themselves with the amusement of tossing pennies to the children who ran along the bank, and in being allowed to smoke and have lights after dark. In the quiet and peace of the harbor all thoughts of stuffy quarters and of ship's food were forgotten in the satisfaction of knowing that soon there would be opportunity to begin the work for which they had set out. With thoughts of the debarkation, all turned in for their last sleep on shipboard.


CABLEGRAM

2549 NY 8 512 P ZAUG25-17

FRANCE

KINARD 1631 ARCH ST PHILA

SAFE WELL

HUBBELL

The "Antilles" returned to America and brought over one more load of troops. That was her last trip. While on her way back to the United States she was torpedoed and went down in six minutes.

Chapter VI

"So This Is France!"

THERE was no mockery about the term "Sunny France" on the morning of August twenty-first. Beautiful weather greeted the men and few lingered long over their last meal on shipboard. Immediately after mess the troops landed and the Signal Battalions marched through the crooked streets of the quaint old town. There had been few American soldiers in St. Nazaire and crowds quickly gathered to wave and shout their greetings. Children ran along the streets, tossing flowers to the soldiers and attempting to grasp their hands. After leaving the town, the march led over dusty roads to the recently constructed Base Camp No. 1. At the entrance to the camp a Marine Band struck up lively tunes at the arrival of each new unit. It did not take long for the men to make themselves at home. Some unloaded and unpacked the baggage. More important, others hurried around to find the material with which to answer the question "When do we eat?"

The camp, although prepared to receive thousands of troops, was still in course of construction. Everywhere were French soldiers working on new barracks, assisted by details of German prisoners. These latter were a curiosity —it was the first sight of the enemy, but American guards forbade conversation with them.

Many were the new regulations to be learned. The Battalion was frequently assembled so that instructions could be passed out to the men. The greatest stress was laid on the new censorship regulations, which were in such

Disembarking

an embryonic condition that they were changed almost daily. Many of the letters which had been written aboard the steamer had to be rewritten because of the rigidness of the rules. It seemed to most of the men that about all they were allowed to say was, "Somewhere in France. I am here and well. Good-bye."

German Prisoners—One of the First Sights at St. Nazaire

Dickson had been a diligent student of the French language, both at Monmouth Park and on the way over. Hardly had he landed at St. Nazaire than he looked around for an opportunity to try it out. He saw a Frenchman and approached him. Very carefully, in his very best French, he asked a question. The Frenchman looked at him in a puzzled way and then said: "If you'd say that in English, I'd understand you a d—— sight better."

An old friend turned up at camp on the second evening—Lieutenant Repp of Company "D." The erstwhile Supervisor of Buildings was arrayed in a foreign made uniform with Sam Browne belt, boots and spurs, and it seemed that service in France had quickly transformed old "Bill" from a civilian of quiet tastes to a military tailor's model. Lieutenant Repp had already gone

over much of the territory in which the Battalion would work, and he, with Lieutenant Glaspey, had determined in general the routes which would be followed, the type of construction to be used and where material for the work might be obtained. In studying telephone needs, these officers had covered by automobile some sixteen hundred miles, passing through more than six hundred towns. Lieutenant Repp suggested that the Majors of the two Battalions go to Paris to report to Colonel Russell so that they might obtain definite ideas on the work which they might be expected to do. This suggestion was immediately followed. On their return, they too were splendidly decked out with boots and spurs and Sam Browne belts.

Drills were started as soon as the men had become established in the camp and, as a very pleasant bathing beach was located not far distant, a hike to this beach and a swim in the Bay of Biscay became a part of the daily drill program.

New acquaintances were made each day and evening during the stay at St. Nazaire, particularly in the nearby *cafes*, and the soldiers found *Suzanne* and *Elaine* and other attractive waitresses most helpful in teaching them French. There was one group, consisting of Foust, Hasskarl, Bradford and Price, who were rather secretive, rarely taking any one with them on their evening walks and visits to the *cafes*. What the attraction was has always remained a mystery.

A Y. M. C. A. tent had been erected. Entertainments were arranged from time to time, and one evening Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Adams Gibbons provided a most interesting program. A track and field meet had been scheduled for the second day after the Battalion's arrival in camp. Company "E" saw to it that the Signal Corps was represented, Hackett winning the fifty-yard dash and taking second place in the "hundred," W. J. Beck winning one first and a second in the weight events and Scanlon taking third in the "hundred."

On the twenty-third, orders were received directing a large detail to proceed immediately by train to Chaumont to install a telephone system for General Pershing's Headquarters, soon to be moved from Paris to that place. Men from Company "E" were assigned to the task, and Lieutenant Gauss, with his detail, set off, after Lieutenant Meigs had obtained for them supplies and coffee money, this latter to enable them to purchase hot coffee from the French canteens at various stops long the line. At Orleans there was an opportunity to see the famous Cathedral, with the scaffolding for repairs, abandoned when the workmen were called to war, still in place. During the stop at Troyes, Hackett and McAnallen wandered so far from the train that it later rolled on toward Chaumont without them. These adventurous tourists, however, boarded another train, an express, and arrived at Chaumont ahead of the detail.

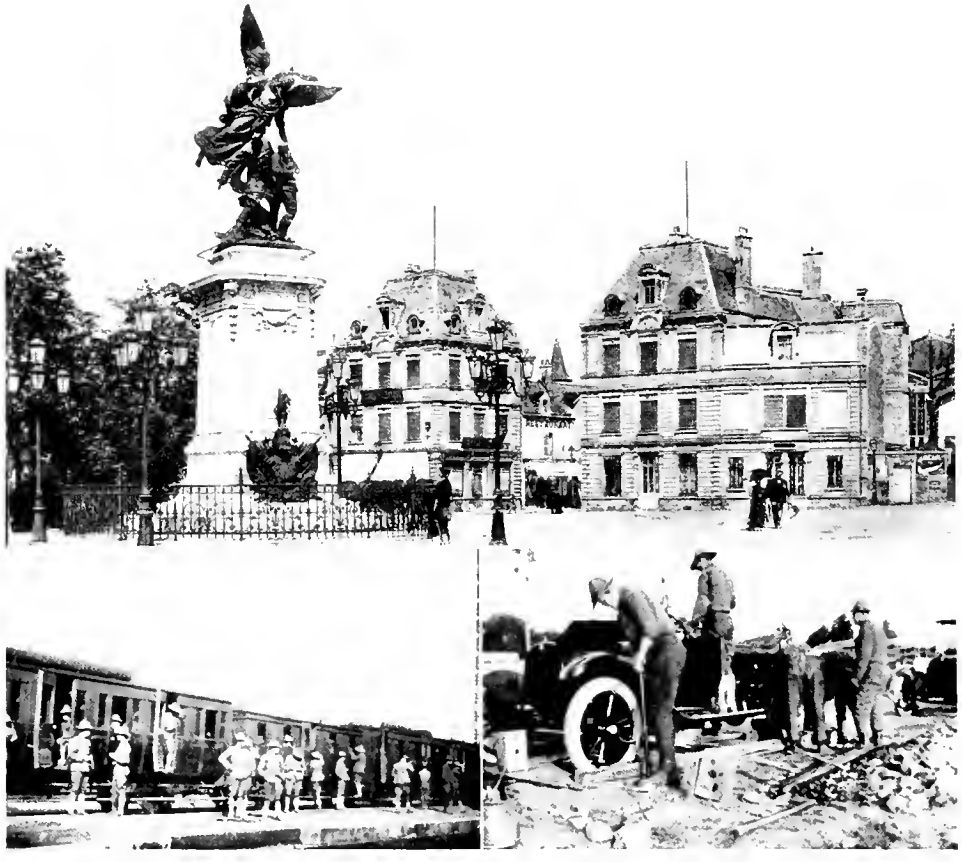
Lieutenant Glaspey met the detail and it was marched through Chaumont amid the cheers of the French populace. The French barracks which were to

Barracks, Base Camp No. 1, St. Nazaire

be used by the Americans had not been sufficiently disinfected, and the men pitched their shelter tents in a field nearby. The ground was stony, but after their two days and nights in the crowded compartments of a French coach all were weary enough not to lose any time worrying about their rough beds. The following morning they tackled their first big job.

A call from Paris sent Ryno, O'Brien and Noonan, of Company "D," to that city to take over and organize a telegraph office. Ryno eventually returned to his company in February, 1918, but the other men, two of the best telegraph operators in the Battalion, were officially detached from their organization so they might remain on duty at this most important office. Ryno tells his story of the early days in the Paris Office:

> "After General Pershing and his staff moved to Chaumont, the Paris office became the headquarters of the line of communications, and I was made chief operator. During my connection with this office it grew from a single position to sixteen positions, not including two sets of repeaters used on the Chaumont-London wires, requiring thirty-five operators and ten clerks to handle the traffic. The majority of this equipment was installed under my direction. In fact it was generally necessary that I do the work alone as there were no special installation men in Paris at the time. A little later Lieutenant Fay, with a detachment of Western Electric men, arrived and at once proceeded to equip the office with all-American equipment. In addition to my duties as chief operator, I was in charge of a local cable office. The E. F. M., meaning "Expeditionary Force Message," enabled every member of the American Expeditionary Forces to send cablegrams to America at reduced rates.
>
> "On account of the rapid growth of this cable department, it became necessary to organize an auditing office, and I was trans-



Above—The Railroad Station at Chaumont
Lower left—On the Way to Chaumont Lower right—Assembling Cars at St. Nazaire

EARLY DAYS IN FRANCE

ferred to that office, and remained there until returned to the Battalion in February, 1918, where I was immediately introduced to a bar and shovel."

United States soldiers were still a novelty in France. The French people were eager to show their appreciation of America's participation in the war. During the stay at St. Nazaire the Battalion received an invitation to a reception at La Baule on Sunday, August twenty-sixth. About forty were allowed to go and lots were drawn to see who would be the lucky men. La Baule is a fashionable French watering place on the Brittany coast, where many Parisian families are accustomed to spend the summer. The town had been beautifully decorated and there were triumphal arches and floral bowers.

The soldiers on their arrival at La Baule formed at the station and marched through the town behind an artillery band, the people showering them with

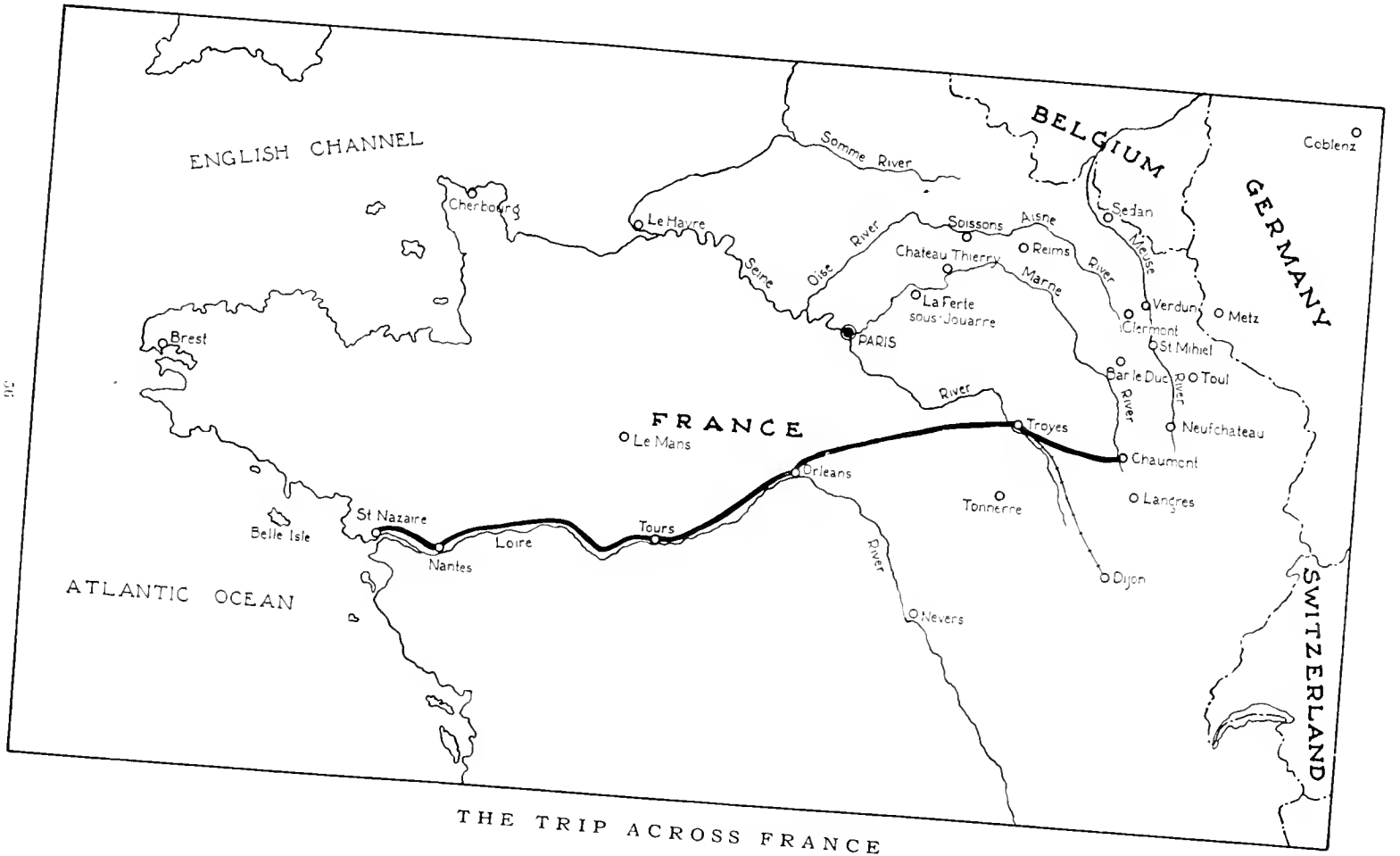
flowers. At the City Hall the town reception committee, headed by the Mayor, made speeches of welcome, which few of the men understood. The column was then dismissed and the soldiers mingled with the people. Each resident of the town had constituted himself a committee of one to receive and entertain whomever he happened to meet, and the American soldiers scattered in all directions. During the afternoon the beach was crowded, and the soldiers splashed about in borrowed bathing suits. On the program were Punch and Judy shows, moving pictures and other forms of amusement. The whole town turned out to say farewell to the men when they departed for St. Nazaire that evening.

Orders had been received on the night of the ship's arrival that the First Battalion was to go to Chaumont and the Second to Dijon. The time for leaving camp was given as August twenty-seventh, at thirteen o'clock—the first introduction to this extremely practical Continental method of indicating time on railroads and in the Allied armies. The march to the station was started in a terrific downpour of rain. Kraus, of Company "D," was left behind to see that Signal property arriving on any of the transports did not go astray. That Kraus accomplished well the work to which he had been assigned was evidenced after he had returned to the Battalion, when he was recommended by high officers of the Signal Corps for the April class of the Army Candidates School.

Much has been told of the troop cars marked—"Hommes 40, Chevaux 8"—but fortunately, or so it seemed at first, the two Signal Battalions traveled in passenger coaches. As the hours of the long trip rolled by, many of the men, generally six in each compartment, began to feel that they might have had less cramped quarters in the little freight cars. Worse still, a few of the compartments contained seven or eight men. In one of these latter, Tomlinson slung his shelter tent as a hammock near the ceiling, one slept in the aisle below, one under each seat and two on top of each seat. Koser, another man who drew a place in a well crowded compartment, describes the situation:

"Say, folks, that was *some* nest!
The trip was long and weary,
I lost my pants and shoes,
And Corporal Park's feet were in my face
When I woke up from a snooze."

At each stop there was wild confusion among the French railroad employees. The interpreter invariably learned from the *Commissionaire de la Gare* that the train would stop for only five minutes. Usually, after waiting for perhaps forty minutes, it would be learned that the train might remain there for another half hour. Immediately the coaches would discharge their weary passengers. The officers, for whom no corned beef and hard tack had been provided, hurried to the buffet, there to encounter a chattering and excited mob.



THE TRIP ACROSS FRANCE

The only way to get any attention was to start away with some food—then the price was quickly ascertained. Throughout the journey the greatest caution was impressed upon each one because of the possible presence of enemy spies. Within the coaches and at each station there were displayed placards bearing the admonition:

"Taisez Vous!
Mefiez Vous!
Les Oreilles Ennemies
Vous Ecoutent!"

The trip led through Nantes, and on the following day through Orleans and the region of the chateaux. On the morning of the third day a halt was made at Troyes. Here the Battalions were separated, the Second starting for Dijon. The Chaumont train reached its destination at noon.

As the Battalion assembled outside the station Lieutenant Glaspey, with Captain Behn of Colonel Russell's staff, arrived and directed the march through town, passing the large barracks, soon to become General Pershing's headquarters, to a beautiful boulevard, and under the trees along this road tents were pitched. The procession developed into another warm reception from the French.

Before the Battalion had started toward Chaumont, Engstrom, Urffer, Whitlock, Armstrong and Craigmile had been sent to a motor park at St. Nazaire to assemble motorcycles and trucks. There were no tools provided other than those in the kits accompanying the machines, and the park at the time consisted of a lot into which the motors were dumped as they were taken from the ships. There was no shelter under which to work on the assembling, but nevertheless when it was time for the Battalion to pull out, these men had fixed up three trucks and a motorcycle, the first motor equipment used by the Signal Corps in the American Expeditionary Forces. The Second Battalion in a similar manner obtained motor equipment, and under the command of Lieutenant Christman, the Supply Officer of the Second Battalion, the trucks for both Battalions set out from St. Nazaire.

On the way across France another man was detached. Custard, of Company "E," was retained at Nevers to assist in the establishment of one of the largest Signal Corps bases, and was later transferred from his company and commissioned a Lieutenant in the Signal Corps.

CHAPTER VII

At General Headquarters

THE Company "E" detachment under Lieutenant Gauss had reached Chaumont three or four days before the remainder of the Battalion, and had immediately set to work, under the supervision of Lieutenant Glaspey. Telephone and telegraph equipment and a lighting plant were needed at once in the Caserne Lambert for General Pershing was soon to be established there. The 100-line switchboard was installed by Mumford, Heisler and Gaghagen; Spears with John Miller and Graber set up the "Delco" power plant; while several installers placed the wiring in the buildings which formed the barracks. Telegraph service to Paris was established over a wire leased from the French and operated by George, Lindley and Bierfreund. Such were the beginnings of the Signal Corps activities at Chaumont, which later developed into a service comparable in size and number of messages handled with the largest offices in France.

Those who were detailed to this wire work soon learned to appreciate the solidity of French masonry, particularly as it was necessary to do all of the drilling for attachments with the very light French tools. But these tools had to be used because the American type was not yet available. Captain Behn and Lieutenant Glaspey were unceasing in their efforts to obtain an adequate supply of tools and material.

During the installation of telephones at the barracks it became necessary, as there was no underground connection, to swing a span of aerial cable between two of the buildings. Aerial cable was unknown in France and the

French engineers were skeptical. They felt that this form of construction could not be lasting. However, Russell and McAnnallen, the cable experts of Company "E," twisted together bare wire and made a sufficiently strong wire rope from which to suspend overhead the extremely heavy French underground cable. On account of the success of this aerial cable job, Russell and McAnnallen were sent to Paris to instruct the French telephone men in aerial cable construction.

The Battalion camp was situated under rows of beautiful big oaks which lined the boulevard. In clear weather the location was delightful and the views beautiful. The ground fell off rapidly into the valley of the little Marne. Far to the north and west the hills were dotted here and there with glistening spires, each denoting one of the innumerable small villages. In wet weather, however, the camp was far from comfortable. For the sake of concealment, the tents were kept under the trees, and this location, exposed to the north and west winds, was extremely disagreeable. There were no cots, and it took but little rain to make soggy masses of the straw-filled bed sacks. This, however, was in line with the ideas of the Commander-in-Chief, who was anxious that the men become quickly hardened to the rigors of camp life.

To insure the completion of the headquarters' telephone equipment on scheduled time, all available central office men were sent to help Lieutenant Gauss as soon as the camp had been established. As a result, in just one week, both telephones and electric lights were working.

There have been many signal organizations which had claimed the credit for erecting the first poles in France. It would be a hard matter to convince the men of the First Battalion that the six poles which they erected for the stringing of telephone and electric light wires around Headquarters that last week in August, 1917, were not the first to be erected by the American Signal Corps.

The first American officers arrived at the new Headquarters on the first of September, and the French planned a dedication ceremony for the afternoon. When the exercises were about to begin, it was discovered that there were no American troops present! How could American Headquarters be dedicated without a "doughboy" to grace the occasion? Somebody had an inspiration. The First Telegraph Battalion! Why not? Off came the overalls, and on went the uniforms. In a very few minutes, they lined up at attention as the exercises were carried out and the American and French flags were raised to the tops of the staffs. Thus did the Battalion represent the rank and file of the whole American Army at the dedication of General Headquarters, A. E. F.

During the week following the arrival in this camp, the officers went over the route for the first trunk line, to be built between Chaumont and Neufchateau. The route had been tentatively selected by Lieutenant Repp and,

in a broad way, permission had been obtained from the state authorities to place poles along the roads, across bridges, and through towns. The details of the route, however, had not been studied nor had materials been obtained. Lieutenants Repp and Glaspey were delegated by the Chief Signal Officer to obtain poles and arrange for their distribution. It was at first planned that all of the poles should be shipped from America, but after realizing the vast number which would be required, Colonel Russell decided that the cargo space could not be spared and that poles must be obtained in France. Lieutenant Repp obtained from the French *Postes et Telegraphes* and from other

Above left: The Aerial Cable Above right: Underground Construction
Center: Underground Construction
Lower left: The Camp Under the Trees Lower right: The Mess Tents Were Centers of Interest

AT CHAUMONT

sources about seven thousand poles and, as soon as the studies were made for this first line, he set about obtaining French brackets, wire and other fittings. While the studies were progressing Major Hubbell, with some of his staff, traveled up and down the highways to settle various construction problems which had arisen.

McCann, who was "chauffeuring" for the Major, gave him a thrill one dark night by bumping into a team of oxen.

Although it could readily be seen before the construction was begun that it would eventually be a twenty- or thirty-wire line, there was so little material available, that only one pair of wires could be strung at the start. French construction in ordinary times does not countenance crossarms along the highways. They are considered *pas jolie*, and furthermore, the French believe that their soil is not sufficiently solid to hold single poles with crossarms. Where crossarms are used they are usually placed on "H" fixtures consisting of two poles. Probably the most important reason of all, however, for this opposition to crossarms comes from the fact that their use would require either that the lines be placed on private property or else so close to the trees bordering the highways as to require that the latter be trimmed. It is difficult to decide whether the suggestion of trimming trees or of placing poles on private property caused the greater consternation among the French officials. In all of the early negotiations the French were very specific in ordering that the lines be built between the driveway and the rows of trees paralleling either side of the road. Discussion on this last point introduced to the Battalion the then Captain Voris, Signal Officer of the First Division, who later became Signal Officer of the First Army Corps, to which this "Battalion of Experts," as he called it, was attached.

Captain Voris was most determined that it was unwise to consider building the Neufchateau line between the trees and the edge of the road, because he felt sure that the road would become a much used military highway, and there would be constant danger of the breaking of poles by the heavy traffic. His opinion prevailed and it was decided that this main line should be built on the field side of the border of trees. Wherever it was necessary to place any poles on private property the formal consent of the property owners had to be obtained and the signed *permission* filed with all other papers relating to the line.

In order to build the line tools were necessary, but there were few of the American variety to be had. Several trial efforts were made to ascend poles by the use of French "climbers." These climbers closely resembled the curved section of a crab's claw, and it was almost suicidal for a lineman to attempt to walk when fitted out with them.

In climbing poles a French lineman takes a very short step and feels quite secure because the "hook" with its toothed edges, attached to each foot, more

than half encircles the pole. After descending from the pole the Frenchman removes his hooks and carries them to the next pole. The American lineman puts on his "spurs," as he calls them, when he starts work in the morning, and keeps them on until he takes them off at noon, or perhaps not until evening.

French Lineman

Some one had smuggled a pair of American spurs into France with his other property and, using these as a pattern, Lieutenant Meigs rented a blacksmith shop and set Sebring and King, with Grant, Urffer and Lander to work making spurs; he also commandeered a saddle shop and, with a wonderful display of patience, demonstrated to the woman in charge how the leather straps for these home-made spurs were to be fashioned. When they were completed Lieutenant Meigs was told by the woman that he could not take them from the shop until they were paid for—such was the attitude, and not without some reason, of the French toward army trade. The Supply Officer had used all of his cash in buying large stocks of shovels, hatchets and other tools, but he must have these straps. After exhausting his French and his patience, he bundled them under his arm and started down the street followed by the large, irate French woman, waving her arms and protesting loudly. When the little procession reached camp, Meigs managed to raise the cash to pay the bill. He gave her the money and patted her on the back, and the sun shone once more.

Shovels, bars, drills, and hammers were obtained from the French after scouring the country in all directions, even including Paris, but the tools were not of the substantial type to which the men were accustomed.

The Battalion camp at Chaumont was the center of interest each afternoon, and particularly on Sundays, when almost the entire French population visited it. These good French people swarmed through the tents, chattering and asking innumerable questions. They were particularly interested in the two mess tents, and would hang around the camp until meals were served, so that they could watch the food disappear and perhaps obtain helpings of beef stew and potatoes, and a small piece of white bread, the like of which they had not seen since the war began, and which they called *gateau*. Some of the men of the Battalion saved their mending for Sundays, and when attractive

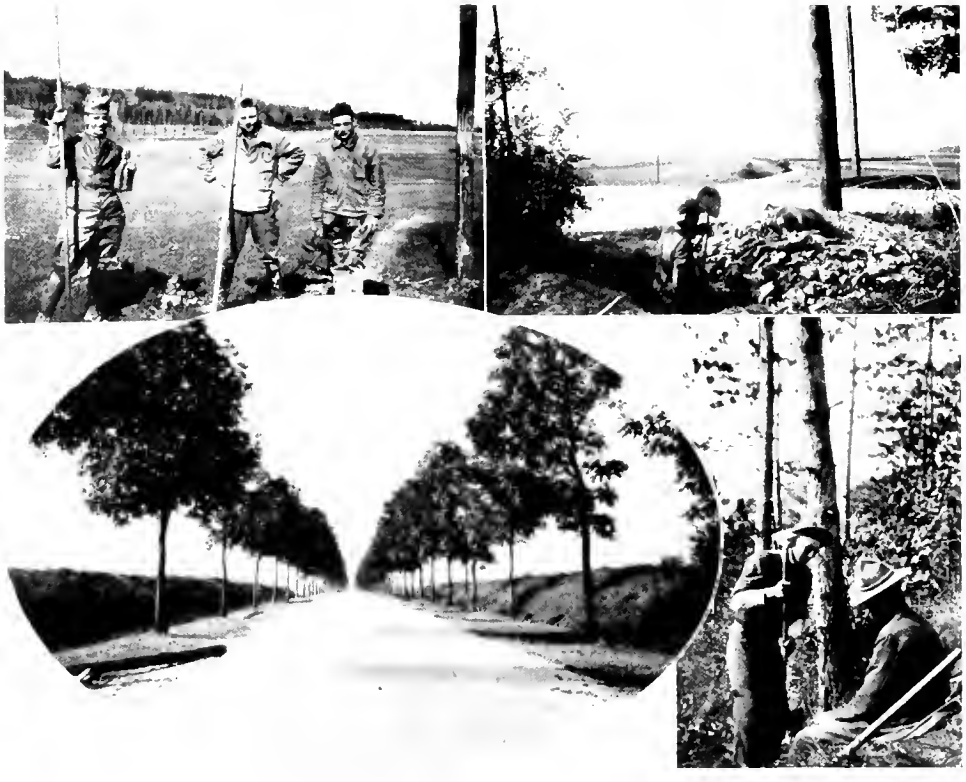
visitors (female, of course) wandered toward camp, the men appeared with their "housewives," the gifts of the girls of The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania, and, after a little laborious effort, were sure to have an interested mademoiselle finish the job for them. This practice was not so profitable for Cowan who, having in this way had new chevrons attached to his overcoat and the coat returned neatly folded, later discovered after mademoiselle had gone that the buttons from the coat had also disappeared.

In the barracks adjoining general headquarters French recruits of the class of 1919 were being trained. Most of these men, or rather boys, were then nineteen years old, but mixed with them were a few who seemed much older, perhaps men who had formerly been exempt from service or considered not up to the physical standard, but who now in the final combing out of French man-power had been called to the colors. Compared with the splendid physical specimens in the Battalion, these very young French recruits, who were in the service fully two years before their time, seemed almost of a smaller race.

During this period such a growth of business developed from the American Headquarters over the various French lines, then the only means of communication, that the French decided it would be necessary to place an underground cable between the American and French exchanges. Details of men were furnished by the Telegraph Battalion to dig the trench into which this cable would be placed. The erstwhile telephone construction men, central office men and telegraph operators developed blisters, sore backs and irritable dispositions. "Squad" McKinney, formerly a commercial clerk, lost his "corporation." The telegraphers in the Battalion recalled with a joyless smile that advertisement: "Wanted—5,000 Telegraphers for the Army." But the trench was soon completed and the cable laid, to the horror of the American cable experts, without any conduit, the only protection being a light layer of sand and broken stones immediately around the cable before the trench was filled.

This job was in charge of Sergeant Dickson, and the men began to appreciate the force of Lieutenant Suddath's familiar expression, "The Army is a cold blooded proposition." The trench led past a house, in front of which a pretty mademoiselle sat each day, making gloves. It seemed difficult for the men to keep their minds on the work in the trench. They could not make their eyes behave. The hard-hearted Dickson, who was capable of talking the language of the mademoiselle in what might have been called "pidgin" English or "pidgin" French, depending on the native tongue of the person listening to him, explained to the young woman that these men in their blue denims were prisoners of war and very dangerous characters. Thereafter, misbehaving eyes and coy glances had no effect on the mademoiselle.

After many trips by day and conferences by night, the route for the Neufchateau line was selected. The wire which Lieutenant Repp borrowed from



On the Chaumont-Neufchateau Line

the French, pending the arrival of American supplies, was received. With a Battalion of eager and willing men, two small trucks, two motorcycles and one "flivver," the construction of the line was started. Setting-up exercises and mess were finished each morning before dawn. Evening mess, after the work became well started, was served in the gathering dusk. To deliver all of the men at their work, have mess on hand at noon, and return the men to camp, to say nothing of distributing the poles along the road after obtaining them at Foulain (a town about twelve kilometers south of Chaumont), the little motor detail had its hands full. It was kept constantly on the road from six in the morning until long after dark. To the motor mechanics of both of the companies is due great credit for keeping the trucks in shape under such heavy and constant use.

The line followed high ground all the way from Chaumont to Neufchateau and almost all of the holes had to be dug through solid rock. The steel of the foreign made tools was soft, and as soon as the shop forces had finished making the linemen's spurs they were put to work on the never-ending job of sharpening digging bars and repairing shovels.

During the training at Monmouth Park, during the days on the water, and until they reached Chaumont, the work was of such a nature that the most calloused hands had become soft. In this job of drilling rock holes with soft steel bars when even the old-time linemen suffered, the central office men and telegraphers developed tremendous blisters. Lord and Peterson were sent to the hospital, where it required over six weeks to heal the abscesses on their hands. Incidentally this pair was so well cared for in the hospital that they were loath to return to camp. But that is another story.

As dynamite had not yet been received from America, it was arranged with the French engineers to use some of their explosive called "cheddite." A supply was obtained at Langres. The French were extremely careful to warn the Americans of its tremendous power and treachery. Only those most experienced in the use of dynamite were taken for the first trial and, after a hole was drilled in the rock, the charge placed and fuse lighted, every one retired a comfortable hundred yards to await results. The "old-timers" characterized the explosion as being almost as powerful as that of a small firecracker, and before the day was over holes were being fairly successfully blown with charges ranging from four to six times the maximum charge advised as safe by the French.

As soon as any of the men could be spared from shifting and adjusting the constantly growing plant at General Headquarters, they, too, were put out on the line, and many were the amusing and pathetic comments of the instrument men who had never before tried to dig holes. Cavanaugh, of Company "E," was particularly outspoken in his aversion to the use of digging tools, although he worked along cheerfully and steadily. Two years before, Cavanaugh had been a candidate for Congress on an eight-hour day platform, and his views of working days of twelve and fourteen hours, rain or shine, on rock holes, were interesting but not printable. Hannam, of

The Camp at Liffol le Grande

Interpreter Thevelin

Company "D," whose telephone experience had consisted largely of installing telephones and working in central offices, did not appreciate at all his introduction to the "steel pencil."

In order to make the greatest possible speed, work had been started on a section of the line, the route for which seemed open to little question. The sections upon which the engineering was more difficult were held until later. As the work progressed and it became almost impossible for the three trucks to meet all of the demands for transportation, Company "D" was moved to a field near Liffol le Grande, and worked on the upper part of the line.

Tents were pitched under the trees along the highway in what had been a wheat field. When the rains started, the camp became a sea of mud. But "D" Company enjoyed life at Liffol, and, under the cheerful influence of Captain Wattles and Lieutenant Lawrence, developed into an extremely smooth-working and happy family. With the limited number of trucks, the supply of rations sometimes ran low. Farrington, in an effort to keep down comment in the "bread line," sallied forth occasionally with Dailey and Tomlinson, to raid neighboring potato patches.

To facilitate the delivery of poles, Lieutenant Glaspey had arranged to have them shipped to a number of stations along the route. It required constant watchfulness to learn of their arrival, and a great deal of following up to hurry the shipments. Here it was realized for the first time that there were a large number of towns bearing almost the same names, and one must be careful always to use the whole name. One large shipment of poles had been ordered to Vesaignes, Glaspey having in mind Vesaignes-sous-Lafauche. After the orderly progress of the work had been held for several days, it was discovered that these poles had been sent to the unqualified Vesaignes—many kilometers to the south.

Camouflage

On the trip from St. Nazaire, the truck train was directed by an interpreter, Edouard Thevelin, who remained attached to the Battalion. Another interpreter who had accompanied the Battalion on its trip by railroad, returned to the seaport town after he had delivered his charges at Chaumont. Thevelin early became very popular. He was especially helpful to the Supply Officer in arranging for the various workshops and in the purchase of axes, hammers, pliers and other tools.

Village of Prez

"Dad" Murdaugh

When Company "D" moved to Liffol le Grande, Thevelin accompanied this unit to help with the rights-of-way work on the upper section of the line, and all of the negotiations by Company "E" were carried on in the near-French of the Battalion officers and noncoms.

General Headquarters was fearful of German observation from the air, and constantly warned all troops near Chaumont to keep under cover as much as possible. At night but a single flickering gas light was permitted in the town. This was dubbed the "Gay White Way." It was necessary to camouflage all tents or canvas which could not be concealed under the trees. This made the camp look far more war-like. "D" Company's camp, being almost fifty kilometers nearer the front, also had its tents decorated.

Constant work in the open air, although the weather was frequently unpleasant, kept most of the men in splendid physical shape. There were, however, a few cases for the hospital. Pemberton, who had for a long time had a bothersome knee, became so crippled with rheumatism that he could do nothing but hobble around close to camp, and collect souvenirs from the French soldiers in the nearby barracks. When Company "D" moved to Liffol, "Pem" was dispatched to a hospital, and his various shifts took him on a tour of France. The first accident case occurred when Buehler, on a motorcycle, attempted to turn out for a French artillery column, which occupied much of the road, and collided with a tree. "Marty" spent several weeks after that at the Bazoilles Hospital. Another hospital patient was Haislop. This big lineman developed a pain in his back which Lieutenant Hasskarl proceeded to "cure" with a French plaster. Walter spent two weeks in the hospital while new skin replaced the blisters and upon the day of his return to work, as he himself puts it, "A 'rookie' let a pike slip out of a pole and hit me on the head." That time the hospital sentence was "eight stitches, eight days." Then, too, there was a little scare of measles

in the camp at Liffol, and Althouse was ostracized with "Silent" Bigham, in a "pup" tent some distance from the camp.

Despite the consistent good health of the organization, Lieutenant Macfarlan collected a large assortment of medical supplies and had them

Some "E" Men

Some from "D"

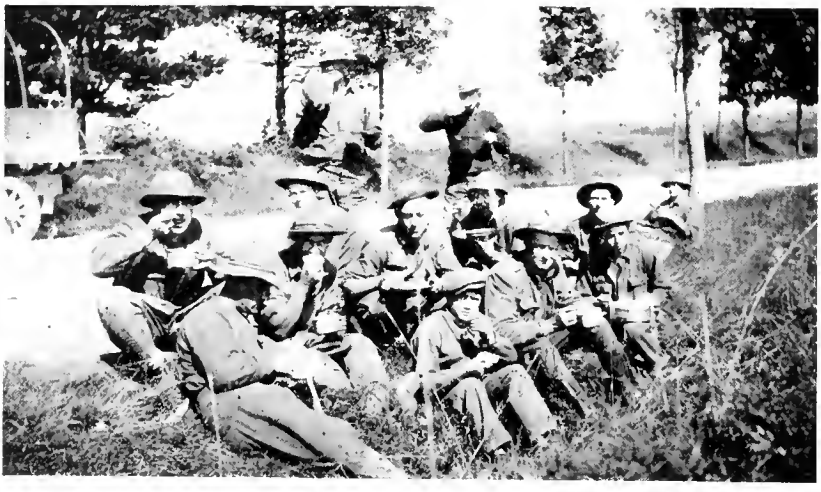
professionally arranged in a tent. This tent was one of the centers of interest for the natives. The doctor, having a good knowledge of French and being of a sociable turn, made many new friends, frequently spending his unoccupied hours in their society. One of the Frenchmen presented the doctor with a puppy, said to be a "Tunisian Bee Hound." This dog was given the name "Joffre," and became the arch nuisance of the camp.

The Neufchateau line continued to grow, and, in order further to speed its completion, a large detail from Company "E" was moved to Rimaucourt with Lieutenant Suddath. From this point they worked early and late. The line followed the main highway, avoiding some towns through which the road made too many bends, and, in others, following straight through the main street. At Prez, one of the latter towns, Murdaugh tried his French on the village authorities and learned that there was a water main on the east side of the highway. "Dad" therefore selected the west side for the pole line, and in digging the first hole succeeded in puncturing the water pipe. Being a master of all trades, Murdaugh set to work to repair the pipe, and the result of his effort was entirely satisfactory to the villagers.

Before building the line into Neufchateau, many routes were studied. The one finally selected crossed two meadows which were traversed by an innocent looking little stream called the Mouzon, one of the smaller branches of the River Meuse. The Mayor of Neufchateau stated that this stream became very much larger in the spring. The route selected, however, seemed the most practical considering the limited materials available and the pole line was believed to be far enough from the banks of the stream to be entirely safe. This probably was the poorest decision along the route, in view of developments the following January.

While the Neufchateau line was being pushed with all possible speed, there were other activities which could not be neglected. Frequent changes and additions were required at General Headquarters, requiring the constant services of several men, as did the actual operation of the telephone and telegraph offices. Colonel Russell, who had investigated certain of the means of communication used by the British, determined upon the establishment of a Motor Dispatch Service, and the first service between Chaumont, Neufchateau and Gondrecourt was placed in charge of Corporal Graber, of Company "E," as chief machinist and supervisor, and was manned by Heisler and Koser, of Company "D," and Giles and Geib, of Company "E." The first machines furnished were of British make—"Triumph," and were successfully operated until a supply of American machines arrived. On one of the trips, Koser with his car ran off the road to avoid hitting a herd of cows and became stuck in the mire of a plowed field. Fullerton came along with a truck and pulled Koser back on the road. This was called "Koser's First Citation"—Fullerton "cited" him in the mud. Throughout the autumn and bitter winter of 1917 these men continued in the Motor Dispatch Service, never failing to deliver a single message. They returned to the Battalion when it was assigned to the First Army Corps in February. Graber, however, had made himself so valuable to the Motor Dispatch organization by the care which he gave the machines that he was permanently assigned to General Headquarters. The Motor Dispatch Service grew until several hundred routes were established all over the war area.

After a burst of hard and strenuous work, which permitted no slowing up on account of bad weather, the first trunk line of approximately fourteen hundred sections was completed on September twenty-seventh. Shortly afterward, the line which the Second Field Battalion of the First Division had constructed between Neufchateau and the headquarters of the Division at Gondrecourt was connected to the Chaumont-Neufchateau line, and became the first American trunk between General Headquarters and the training headquarters of a Division.



Chapter VIII

Hard Work and Some Diversion

BOTH Lieutenants Repp and Glaspey, on being made Captains, were transferred permanently to General Headquarters at this time. This fact, together with the experience gained during these first days in France, made certain changes in the officer personnel advisable. Lieutenant Meigs was made Adjutant, in place of Lieutenant Griest, who was transferred to Company "E." Lieutenant Suddath became Supply Officer, and Lieutenant Lawrence was transferred to Company "E." Lieutenant Foust, newly promoted, was assigned to Company "D."

The following gives the new arrangement:

Major James W. Hubbell—*Commanding*

Headquarters
1st Lieut. F. P. Meigs
Adjutant

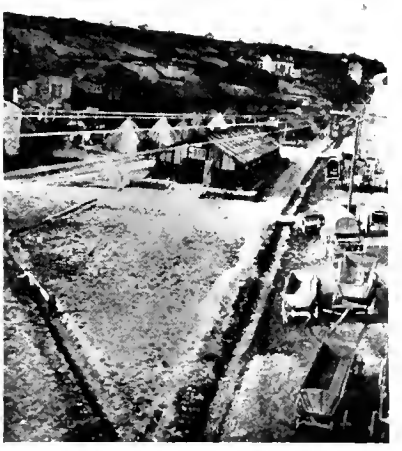
Supply
1st Lieut. L. N. Suddath
Supply Officer

Medical
1st Lieut. Douglas Macfarlan
Medical Officer

Company "D"
Capt. W. P. Wattles
1st Lieut. L. R. Foust

Company "E"
Capt. W. F. Gauss
1st Lieut. T. H. Griest
1st Lieut. C. V. Lawrence

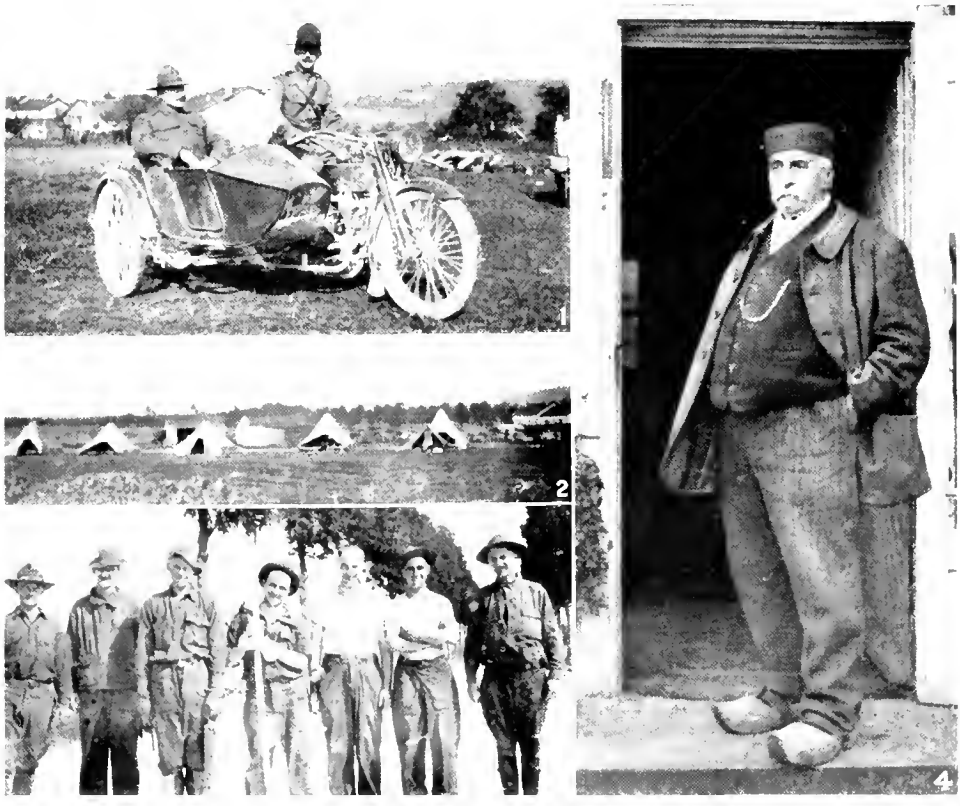
At the start, when the signal work was apportioned between the First and Second Reserve Battalions, the First Battalion was charged with the installation of the telephone equipment and power plant at General Headquarters, and the construction of the trunk line from Chaumont to Neufchateau. The Second Battalion was assigned the installation work for the artillery camp at Valdahon and the construction of the trunk line from Dijon to Chaumont. There was keen rivalry between these New York and Pennsylvania Battalions concerning the speed with which the work would be done. Major Shearer, of the Second, laid a wager with Major Hubbell that the trunk line from Dijon would be completed before the First Battalion reached Neufchateau. The penalty, considered by Major Shearer as particularly appropriate for a Philadelphian, was to be a snail dinner. The First Battalion not only completed the Neufchateau trunk and the Chaumont switchboard installation, but Company "E" started to build toward Dijon and met the Second Battalion some twenty-five kilometers south of Chaumont. The snail dinner which was thus won by the First Battalion has not yet been given.



The Barracks at Neufchateau

In the meantime, Company "D" began wiring various training areas, preparatory to the arrival of American Divisions. The Twenty-sixth, later known as the "Yankee" Division, was assigned to the Neufchateau training area, and there, too, was to be established the headquarters of the Divisional Areas organization. Company "D" dispatched details which began the installation of two forty-line switchboards with their necessary telephones, and strung wires to different nearby towns in which Brigade, Regimental and Battalion Headquarters were located. At the same time, Sergeant Lutz took a detail to Bazoilles to install a switchboard with a number of stations in the hospital being established there by the Johns Hopkins unit. This was the first American hospital in France to have a complete telephone system. Moreover, this system was connected by American circuits to the American board at Neufchateau.

While Company "E" was still working on the Dijon trunk line, Company "D" was made responsible for "Divisional Areas" work. The first area, with Gondrecourt as a center, had been wired by a Field Battalion from the First Division, but it was expected that many of the other areas would be cared for by Company "D" of the Telegraph Battalion. The field at Liffol which had been its home for some time had become a very un-

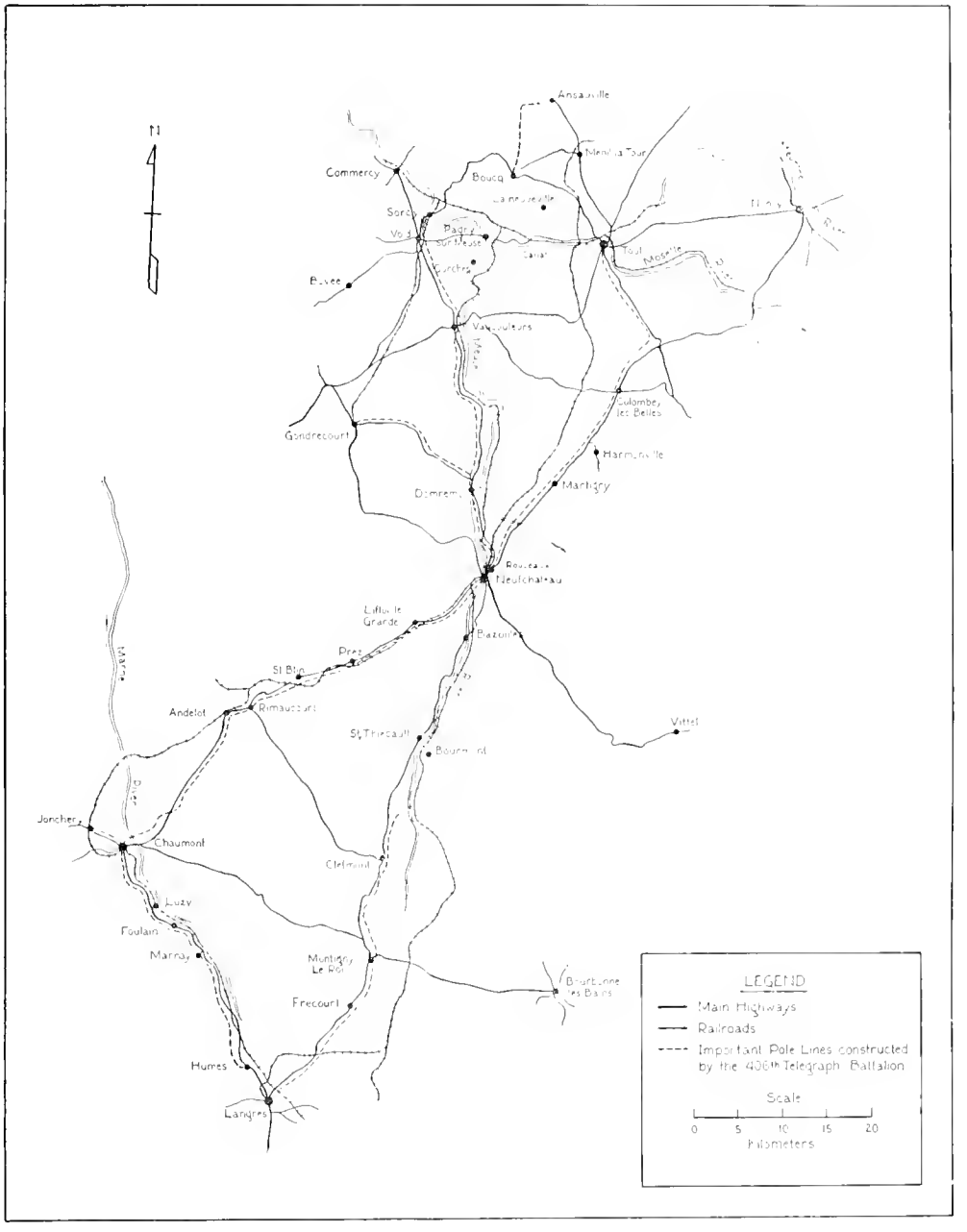


1—After Right of Way 2—The Camp 3—Some of the Men 4—The Mayor

AT LUZY

pleasant habitation due to rains, and further, this camp was far from the center of the new activities. So Captain Wattles moved his men into wooden barracks at Neufchateau. Surveys were made, plans outlined, and material ordered so that the various areas might be wired in time to receive the troops according to schedule.

As soon as the Neufchateau area had been satisfactorily covered, a detachment was ordered to Bourmont to wire the area for the Second Division, which included the brigade of Marines, destined to become famous the following summer. Electrician Brittain took charge of this job with a platoon. Hannam and Craigmile installed the switchboard in the *Hotel de Ville* (City Hall), while the construction men ran numerous lines in the town and to outlying points. One of the first jobs was a pole line with ten wires, from the top of the high hill on which Bourmont is located, down to a railroad and thence to Neufchateau on the poles along the railroad. Billets were at a premium, and these men, who had just left a new, wood-floored barracks at Neufchateau, were required to clean out a stable on the grounds of a chateau.



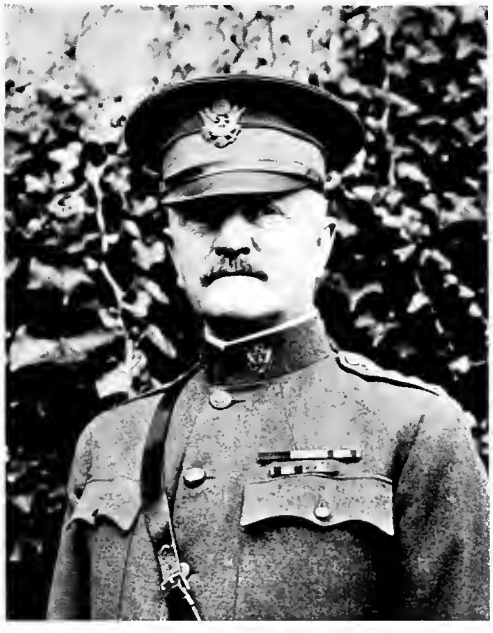
THE TERRITORY AROUND CHAUMONT AND TOUL

One of the sections was assigned to the hayloft, and the other to the first floor. On the first evening, Gardiner and Ricciardi furnished entertainment with their mandolins, on the ground floor, and Graham was singing to his audience in the loft, when suddenly there was a crash—the "hayloft tenor" had stepped upon a loose board and, coming through the floor, landed heavily in the midst of the audience below.

Company "E" was divided in two parts during the construction of the Dijon line south from Chaumont toward Langres. Half of the Company remained with Captain Gauss at Chaumont; the other half, being the platoon which had been stationed at Rimacourt while building the Neufchateau line, was to select a camp site to the south, near the other end of the job. Various places were examined, and a high field near Luzy was chosen as being best adapted for the camp. Before taking any liberties with this field, Major Hubbell, with Captain Gauss and Lieutenant Griest and Interpreter Thevelin interviewed the Mayor of Luzy. The old gentleman shuffled out with his large wooden *sabots* to his door-yard gate, and ushered the Americans into his little study. After learning their mission, he decided he would go with them to interview the owner of the field. His wife, apparently the head of the house, went along, possibly because it was the first opportunity she had ever had to ride in an automobile. The desired permission was obtained, and a few days later the platoon under Lieutenant Griest took possession.

The construction of the line from Chaumont to Neufchateau had taught the lesson that it was not always best to stick too close to the roads, and that possibly too much attention had been paid to the desirability of keeping all poles off private property. Consequently, south of Chaumont, the most direct line was laid out, and deviations from this direct route were made only where absolutely necessary. On one short stretch the road was so crooked that to keep to the highway would have necessitated fourteen "corners" or turns, each with its guy wires to withstand the strain. The shorter route was adopted, although at times it kept the line far from the road. This route led through a large woods. To indicate the cooperation of the French, it should be mentioned that Lieutenant Repp obtained permission from the Paris owner to cut a path thirty feet wide through these woods so as to give the line proper clearance.

The towns people of Luzy previous to this time had seen no American troops, and they were much interested in the little tent camp on the hill. On Sundays they swarmed through the tents, often under the leadership of the Mayor, who had adopted the platoon as his own. One of the most frequent visitors, a man of mixed French and Italian blood, cut the heavy growth of clover around the tents, and while not attending to his duties in the lock house at the canal supplied the tents with flowers and the soup pot with savory vegetables—his method of showing his appreciation of American participation in the war.



General Pershing

At this time a small shipment of American tools arrived, and there was keen rivalry to obtain the familiar shovels, spoons and bars. There were few new construction problems along this line, and the men tackled it with such good will, that one after another the various goals which had been selected as the probable junction point with the Second Battalion were reached and passed. So rapidly did the work progress that it was a hard matter for the survey detail to keep the work mapped out ahead of the construction parties. Hutchinson, with Barto and Shinfessel, held forth in the pole yard at Foulain, and by dint of hard work, kept Cavanaugh busy with his delivery detail. Danley's crowd, who were digging the holes, turned out the earth in rapid style; only by so doing could they keep ahead of Davis and his pole-setters.

At the foot of the hill, near the little camp at Luzy, there was a *cafe*, and the men divided their evenings between this center of amusement and the Y. M. C. A. tent. The little *cafe* was like a dungeon, having a stone floor, the only light entering through the front door. At the rear was the entrance to the wine cellar, under the hill. The walls presented a kaleidoscopic effect, some parts covered with plaster but more places where it had fallen away, leaving the stone bare. Madame, a cheerful matron, cut bread for her many guests by holding the loaf against her doubtfully-clean black waist and cutting toward her (no thought of "safety-first"), chatting pleasantly during the operation. Frequently the evening crowd in the *cafe* was joined by Edmond Jacques, the crippled son of the Mayor, who shared his father's interest in the Americans.

The weather for the first week in October was delightful. In the morning, assemblies and setting-up exercises were held by moonlight, without the aid of artificial light. Later in the month, however, the rain descended once more and the clover field at Luzy became a quagmire. Despite the weather, the men continued at a fast clip and the line grew steadily toward the south.

After one particularly cold, wet day, all of the officers of the Battalion received orders from the Major, directing them to come to Chaumont at

Brigadier-General Russell

once. The occasion of the call was the reception in General Pershing's chateau, in honor of his having been made a full General—the first to attain the rank since General Grant. At the same time, Colonel Russell had been made a Brigadier-General. Generals and Colonels were far more numerous at the reception than Captains and Lieutenants. The Battalion officers, however, took advantage of the opportunity to meet the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff.

More motor equipment had begun to reach France. Frequently, details from the Battalion were sent to the coast, and, after assembling the machines, drove them back to Chaumont for distribution among Signal Corps outfits. From time to time, also, vehicles were purchased in Paris, and lucky were the men detailed to care for their delivery to headquarters, for they were always assured of two or three days for sight-seeing in "Gay Paree."

Probably one of the most interesting of these motor trips was that of a detail of twenty-eight men from the Battalion who set out, under Electrician Conwell, for St. Nazaire, stopping for a short time at Paris. After two weeks at the port, assembling cars and trucks, they started across France with Lieutenant Christman and some Second Battalion drivers. There were fifty-two trucks and several passenger cars in the column. The trip led through Nantes, Angers, Tours, Nevers to Dijon, passing the great wine country, along the famous dike of the Loire, and the cliff-dwellers near Tours. As the trucks proceeded the men were greeted in each city, town and village with cheers and hand-shakes and flowers. No matter where the trucks stopped for the night, the towns-people invited all of the soldiers to dinner. At Dijon this long train was split, half the trucks proceeding to the First Battalion at Chaumont. The truck problem, which had been a very serious one at times, was solved.

Work under high pressure and the maintenance of good health required, among other conditions, satisfactory mess. Any one who has listened to the comment in a mess line realizes that the job of Mess Sergeant is not a bed of roses. "When do we eat?" has a foreboding sound. As the line begins to move, Bill Smith growls, "What! those d—— carrots again today?" Forwood comes along, "Oh, no, you can't camouflage corned beef with

There Were No Dish Washing Machines

tomatoes and spuds and try to tell me it's fresh beef." And from Lutz, "I don't want that soup, it's got onions in it." Such comments as these became too much for Farrington, and he persuaded Captain Wattles to allow him to dig holes, while Dailey and Tomlinson stuck to the job of furnishing "D" Company's food. Gosser in "E" spent much of his time in various provision stores in Chaumont, until the knowledge of French which he thus acquired obtained for him a commission in the Adjutant-General's Department, and Vance became the boss of "E" Company's mess.

With each extension of the A. E. F. organization in the vicinity of Chaumont, the First Battalion, being the Headquarters Battalion, was called upon for more facilities. Such an occasion arose when it was decided to open an Army Staff College and Training School at Langres. Captain Gauss went down to this delightful old walled town and, after interviewing various generals, obtained enough information to enable him the following day to send Sergeant Lowe with a detail of men to install switchboards, and to wire up the barracks which were to be occupied as the headquarters.

The city of Langres was under strict military discipline, and Gallo of "E" Company was left there with MacRonald of "D" to operate the switchboard. Air alarms kept their hands full. It was Gallo's duty on such occasions to call up different officers to have them put out all lights. At one time an officer resented the instructions.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"This is the Chief Operator. I am instructed to have that light put out," said Gallo.

"Well, who in h—— gave you those instructions?" from the officer.

"The Commanding General, sir. Just a moment, I will connect you with him."

"No, no, never mind, I'll put the d—— light out," and up went the receiver. Resourcefulness was one of the main qualities required of an operator. Later the same man, Gallo, was commended by the Chief Signal Officer for this trait during a German raid while at his post in a Radio Intelligence dugout.

"Bill" Brittain's crowd was still working in the Bourmont area, and one morning as the men were lined up for reveille Zeppelins were sighted overhead. Later in the day several of the officers were in Langres to confer with the Second Battalion officers and heard of the capture of the Zeppelins. Noting that one had come down at not a great distance away, they took the opportunity to see it.

Bourmont

The impression gained from the sight of the Zeppelin was such that the entire Battalion was given a holiday so that all could see it. The men had been working hard, and eagerly seized the opportunity for this little excursion. The following day, October twenty-third, both companies set out in trucks. Approaching the town, they encountered travelers afoot, on bicycles, in carts, in automobiles, all going in the same direction. All France seemed to be out to see the sight. Through Bourbonne les Bains, where the smell of acetylene became very pronounced, they went, and up a little valley. All had thought of Zeppelins as being rather large—but this was a knockout. The stern was on a little hill and the structure spanned the valley and crossed a stream. There were four little pendants which seemed to be steering compartments or perhaps cabins, the main carriage having been taken away as soon as the Germans were made prisoners. The smell of acetylene was very strong. French engineers were working on the Zeppelin, climbing over it with their ropes and ladders. It was very much like a tableau of Gulliver and the Lilliputians. The souvenir hunters had a busy time. The French guards kept every one away from the machine except French officers; but, for a slight consideration, they produced almost any kind of souvenir.

"Gulliver and the Lilliputians"

Above—Co. "E" Quarters Below—Battalion Headquarters

AT MARNAY

From the first, the army officers at Headquarters had been most anxious that another location be obtained for the Signal Battalion camp. It was necessary to keep this place as inconspicuous as possible, and therefore the presence of any great number of troops was undesirable. Although the tents were concealed under the trees, or camouflaged in fantastic designs, still it seemed desirable that the Battalion, on account of its activity with trucks and supplies, should seek other quarters. The weather had become extremely inclement, and sleeping in the tents in the middle of muddy fields and along shaded boulevards was anything but pleasant. About the last week in October, quarters were obtained in the town of Marnay, and the Battalion Headquarters and most of Company "E" moved to that town. A part of "E" Company remained at Chaumont to continue minor installations around General Headquarters and to take care of the maintenance work, and also to build a line from Chaumont to Jonchery for the Fifteenth Engineers. This latter, it should be noted, was the beginning of the main telephone line from Chaumont to Paris. Collins, with a few "E" Company men and a

Collins and His Detail

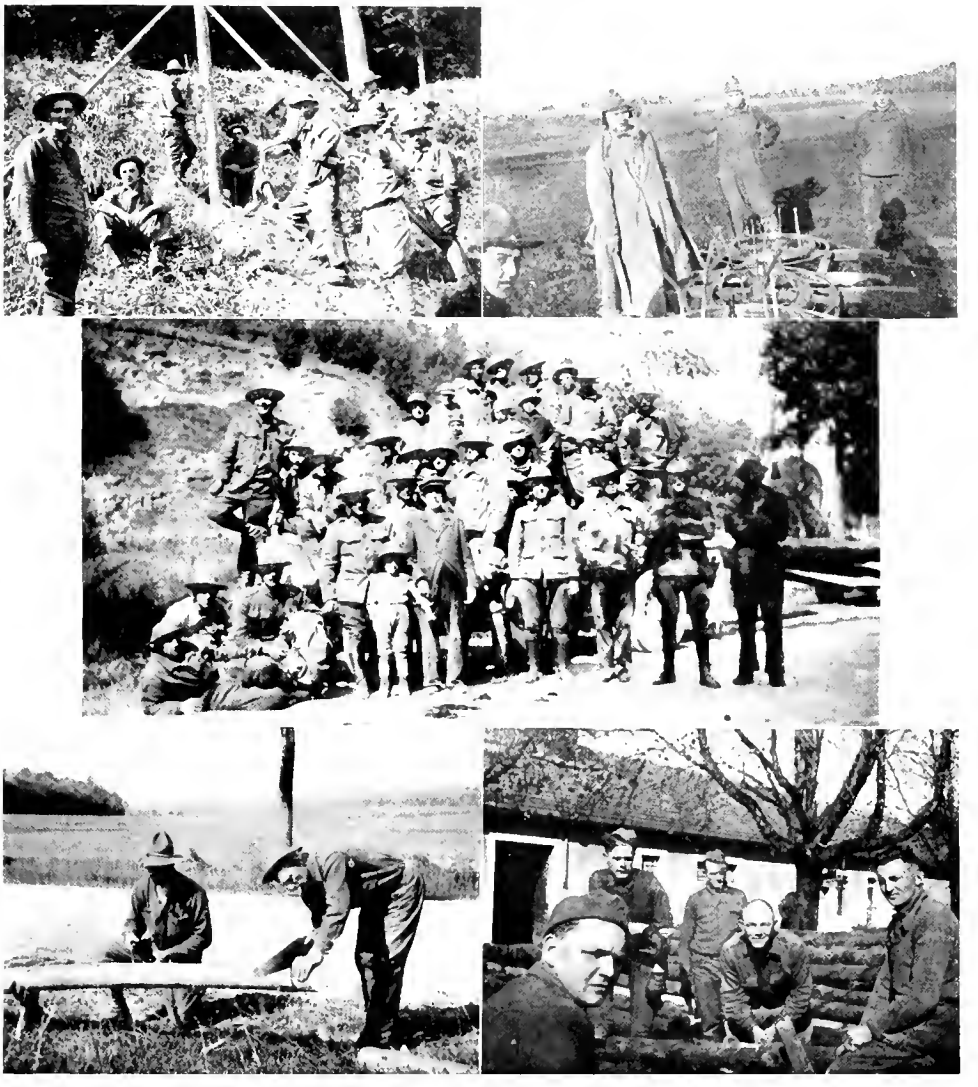
detail of Engineer troops, did a job of which they could well be proud. By a coincidence, the Fifteenth Engineers were a Pittsburgh outfit and the building of this line was like an "Old Home Week" for the boys of Company "E."

At Marnay, Lieutenant Macfarlan found himself in demand to meet the ailments both real and imaginary of the civil population. It was reported that, in addition to the thanks which he earned, the doctor was rewarded for his skillful professional services by having six French infants named for him. He did a lot of splendid work among these poor people who, on account of the war, had been without a village doctor for many months.

The "Little Captain," as Wattles was affectionately called, was running Signal affairs around Neufchateau so smoothly that few outside of "D" Company's happy family knew what was being accomplished. The line running south from Neufchateau developed quickly into the heaviest lead which had been built. In addition to the Chaumont trunk, it carried the trunk to Gondrecourt and the trunks leading south toward the Second Division Headquarters at Bourmont.

On October twenty-eighth the Chaumont-Langres line was completed, the union with the work of the Second Battalion having been made a short distance north of Humes. The men had worked steadily and cheerfully, sometimes through long spells of anything but cheerful weather. For diversion, entertainments were arranged for Hallowe'en. At Neufchateau, Company "D" arranged for a regular old-fashioned party in their comfortable barracks. Most of the entertainment consisted of music, and Banholzer with his mouth organ made a hit. Second to "Banzy" was the kitchen quartet, led by the mess sergeant. During the entertainment there was a generous distribution of apples, raisins and nuts. It was a right merry party.

Battalion Headquarters and Company "E" appointed Bradford and Hackett as a committee to arrange for a place for their entertainment. At first the Mayor of Marnay was consulted, but the town hall was small and the Mayor gathered the impression that he was to be called upon for a speech. This was not on the program so the committee sought quarters elsewhere, determining finally upon the little Inn at Foulain. By the use of trucks, the various groups were collected from Chaumont and Marnay and brought



Building the Line Toward Langres

to the Inn through the clear, cold, moonlit night. In the dimly lighted dining room of the Inn there was an old piano and, despite the fact that there were several keys missing and the instrument was decidedly out of tune, it furnished a great deal of entertainment. The famous Antilles quartet again was in evidence. Smith and Atwood, two of the telegraph operators, brought down the crowd with a Jewish comedy. The roars of laughter soon attracted a number of French soldiers who joined in the merriment. There was boxing which produced several black eyes. Late that night the trucks carried a crowd of happy men back to their quarters.

Chapter IX

Thanksgiving

THE novelty of service in a foreign land gradually had worn off. Hours had been long, and the work hard. Nor was there the excitement of booming guns and dropping shells to stimulate the interest. The camp life far from home and friends, and the pressure under which each assignment was rushed through, did not tend to lighten the labors. The excursion to the fallen Zeppelin had been planned so that the men might see and feel the closeness of the conflict. It gave them a realization that somewhere, not far away, bullets were flying and men were dying in the cause which brought the Battalion to France.

A couple of days' rest and the Hallowe'en celebration put new "pep" in the Battalion and when, on November first, orders were received for a direct pole line from Langres to Neufchateau, the dirt was flying in short order. It was All-Saints Day. As the work started church bells were ringing and all day the French were continually marching to and from the different church services.

This new line was to connect large Army Stores soon to be established at the two terminals, and its construction was necessary to relieve the congestion on the lines through Chaumont. Part of Company "D" was assigned to the Neufchateau end and the Company "E," Luzy platoon, started at

the Langres end being now billeted at Frecourt. So rapidly did the work progress that the construction men were frequently held back because they worked faster than the surveys could be made. Interruptions for more urgent work frequently broke in on the construction of this line and, as a matter of fact, the First Battalion had to leave it entirely before it was completed.

About this time, a decided shake-up in the official family took place. Major Hubbell and Captain Gauss were transferred to General Headquarters, where the former took charge of the engineering work under the Chief Signal Officer and the latter of the maintenance of all Headquarters telephone equipment and, with Captain Glaspey, took care of the constant additions and changes in the Headquarters telephone system. Captain Wattles took command of the Battalion, and Lieutenant Griest was taken from his Frecourt platoon to command Company "D" at Neufchateau. Lieutenant Suddath took "E" Company, and Lieutenant Meigs returned to his first love—the Supply Office. Lieutenant Smith, formerly of the Regular Army, who had recently joined the Battalion, was made Adjutant.

This made the official organization as follows:

Capt. Wattles—*Commanding*

Headquarters	Supply	Medical
1st Lieut. Smith	1st Lieut. Meigs	1st Lieut. Macfarlan
Adjutant	*Supply Officer*	*Medical Officer*

Company "D"	Company "E"
1st Lieut. Griest	1st Lieut. Suddath
Commanding	*Commanding*

Those of Company "D" not engaged on the trunk line were on Divisional Areas work. American troops were arriving much more rapidly than was at first expected. This was fortunate for the situation as a whole, but it kept

The Frecourt Detail and Barracks

the men of the Battalion on the jump. When the advance details from the Divisions arranged with the Signal Corps for the telephone equipment, it was easy to obtain comfortable billets for the Signal men but as the signal work neared completion, the warm welcome quickly cooled.

"Hotel de Ville" at Vaucouleurs

When the detail which had been assigned to provide telephones for the Second Division at Bourmont completed the job, orders were received to prepare the Vaucouleurs area for the Forty-second Division. Immediately, Brittain with his platoon moved to that town. Division Headquarters was to be established in the *Hotel de Ville*, which contained a number of beautiful statues. The citizens had carefully fitted all the statuary with paper fig leaves, so as not to shock the modesty of the "shrinking violets" from America.

"Dad" Murdaugh built a distributing frame in the loft of this building, while Ed Hannam installed and then operated the switchboard until it could be taken over by the Division. Leading over to the railroad along which the main trunks ran, a homemade cable of twenty-five pairs of ordinary insulated wire was strung. Tritle was the leader in the wall-scaling job of festooning this cable to the French house fixtures. Ladders were at a premium and Safety Superintendent John Bailey, could he have seen and heard these men as they stood on the tops of shutters, narrow window ledges, and other points of questionable safety, would have realized that his lessons, although not followed, had at least been learned.

The various activities were carrying the men nearer and nearer to the actual fighting. The Vaucouleurs platoon, particularly, being some thirty kilometers north of Neufchateau, felt the proximity of the Hun. The boom

of the big guns was heard continually. Now, for the first time, the Battalion made the acquaintance of gas masks and helmets. Enemy airplanes were a common sight, sometimes dropping messages such as, "You are our comrades and, now that Russia and Italy are beaten, let us join together and beat our common enemy—England."

While the Vaucouleurs area was being wired, it was necessary to build a line back toward General Headquarters. For a few days service over the French lines was attempted, but life was too short to spend two or three hours obtaining a connection. The quickest plan was again to use the railroad poles, and permission was obtained from the French to attach brackets and crossarms. Brittain's crowd ran the circuit south from Vaucouleurs, while "Vic" Hasskarl, with his platoon, worked north from Neufchateau. Work on this line progressed satisfactorily despite a celebration caused by a letter announcing the arrival of an additional member of the Daniels family. The trunks were completed three days prior to the date requested by General Headquarters.

In the larger centers, like Chaumont and Neufchateau, Y. M. C. A. huts were well organized. As officers were not at all welcome in these huts, the French and American officers organized a club of their own at Neufchateau. The French Mission built the shack designed by a famous Parisian architect, who was in an engineers' regiment, and the "Club Lafayette" was opened with a party November eighth. A splendid concert was rendered by an orchestra composed of French soldiers. Two French Generals and an American General spoke, all expressing joy at the good feeling existing among the Allies.

Gas Masks and Helmets

Upon the arrival of a cargo of Signal Corps supplies, it was decided to string additional wires on the new line from Vaucouleurs to Neufchateau, making necessary more circuits between Chaumont and Neufchateau. All who could be spared from the other work were immediately started on the latter job. Company "D," less the platoon remaining at Vaucouleurs, started south from Neufchateau while "E," less the detachment still working on the Langres-Neufchateau line at Frecourt, started north from Chaumont, Great was the enthusiasm among the men, because they now had real American materials, and enough wire reels to enable them to do an intelligent

and efficient job. Certain developments, however, required that the circuits be completed considerably earlier than was at first anticipated; and regardless of weather, the gangs worked from daylight until dark.

The new circuits progressed so rapidly that it was decided that the time for real Thanksgiving Day festivities could be spared, and every one entered enthusiastically into the preparations for the holiday. The Headquarters and Supply Detachments this time decided that they would have a party of their own, which was to be a boar hunt. Early in the morning they set out and scoured the woods with their large supply of firearms, consisting of one shot-gun and a half-dozen automatic pistols. A signal of five blasts on a whistle had been selected to assemble the party to help drag out the game. During the morning's hunt one shot was fired at what was supposed to have been a wild turkey. Whether it was or not no one will ever know. In the afternoon the game was more active, or perhaps the imaginations more acute, as there were a number of shots fired. But the "five blasts on the whistle" were not heard. The boars had a fine day.

Between Neufchateau and Vaucouleurs

"E" Company's celebration consisted of a banquet at Marnay, where the entire company had assembled while Company "D" collected most of its force at Neufchateau for a similar affair. The Army had made an earnest effort to provide all of the component parts of a real Thanksgiving Day dinner for the troops. A generous supply of turkeys arrived, but the mincemeat, cranberries and other "fixin's" failed. Here, for the first time, the company mess funds, which had been contributed by the employees of the Telephone Company, were brought into action. Very real was the feeling of appreciation toward those friends who, by providing these funds, enabled the soldiers to enjoy an old-fashioned Thanksgiving Dinner. Dailey's part in Company "D's" dinner will not be forgotten. He had been at Vaucouleurs with Brittain's platoon, and while there had made for the Division Quartermaster so many cranberry pies and other Army dainties (the materials, however, furnished by the Quartermaster), that when Thanksgiving Day approached he was given permission to help himself to any supplies he needed for his own "gang." As a result, liberal quantities of cranberries, sugar and flour helped to make the "D" dinner one long to be remembered.

About two o'clock on the afternoon of December fourth the new circuits

were finished. When Captain Wattles and Lieutenant Griest made the report to General Russell at General Headquarters, Major Hubbell being away, the General congratulated them on the speed of construction and on the clear transmission, stating that they were the most satisfactory lines over which he had talked since leaving the United States.

Supply Officer Meigs' greatest trouble at this time was in securing tires for the trucks and other cars. Countless thousands of French soldiers with their hob-nailed shoes were continually marching along the roads. Hob-nails coming loose from the shoes literally covered the road, and the Lieutenant found that hob-nails and rubber tires make a poor combination. He haunted the Quartermaster's office begging and pleading for tires, but with little success. Upon one occasion, the Supply Officer learned from one of his friends in the Quartermaster's Office of the arrival of a carload of American tires and tubes. It was intimated that if Lieutenant Meigs could reach this

Between Chaumont and Neufchateau

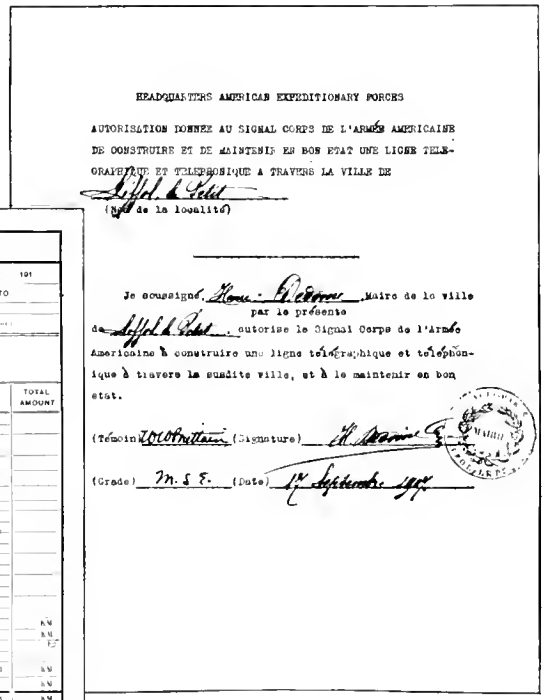
car and absorb some of its contents, he might be able to get away with it. He knew there was such a demand for tires at Headquarters that, if the tires reached the warehouse, there was little chance of any getting to the Battalion. The Lieutenant, with Gardiner, located the freight car, found it open and filled with a fairyland of tires and tubes. An apparently very accommodating Marine came up and asked the Lieutenant if he might be of assistance. While Gardiner went up the road after the truck, Lieutenant Meigs and the Marine were unloading the car. But the seemingly friendly Marine happened to be a guard, and had his schedule so nicely arranged that a detail arrived and caught the Supply Officer red-handed. It seemed that there had been a great deal of trouble from "volunteer" Quartermaster detachments which had been helping themselves to supplies. Lieutenant Meigs, by some means or other—nobody has ever solved the puzzle—so hypnotized the captors that they let him go. He admitted, however, that it took all of his eloquence and suavity and tact to turn the trick. Later when the Supply Officer was telling the story, he was asked:

"But what about the tires? Did you get away with them?"

"H——, yes!" was the answer.

The main trunks to Vaucouleurs had been completed for several days, and the permanent lines to Morlancourt, Bovee and other isolated towns in this area were rapidly nearing completion. Suddenly a conference of French officials was called, and word sent to the Chief Signal Officer that the American

Right-of-way Permit



HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

AUTORISATION DONNEE AU SIGNAL CORPS DE L'ARMÉE AMERICAINE DE CONSTRUIRE ET DE MAINTENIR EN BON ETAT UNE LIGNE TELEGRAPHIQUE ET TELEPHONIQUE A TRAVERS LA VILLE DE

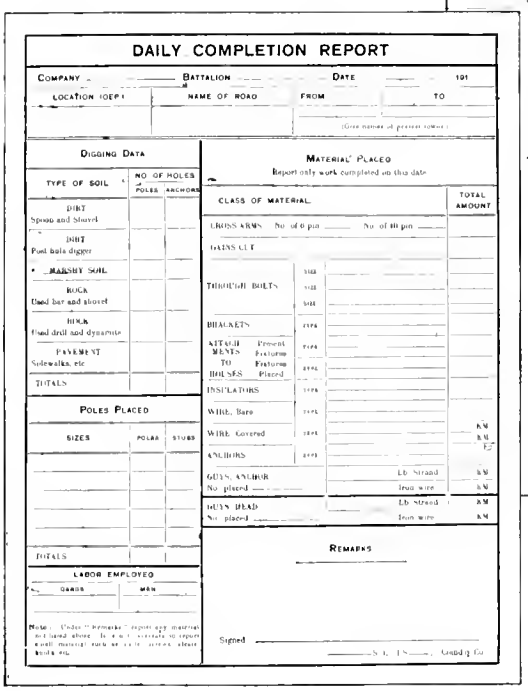
Joffol & Pelut

(Nom de la localité)

Je soussigné, Rene . G. Petrus, Maire de la ville de Joffol & Pelut, par le présente autorise le Signal Corps de l'Armée Americaine à construire une ligne télégraphique et téléphonique à travers la susdite ville, et à le maintenir en bon etat.

(Témoin) (Signature)

(Grade) M. S. E. (Date) 1st September 1917



DAILY COMPLETION REPORT

COMPANY ——— BATTALION ——— DATE ——— 191

LOCATION (DEPT) | NAME OF ROAD | FROM | TO

(Give names of persons towns)

DIGGING DATA

TYPE OF SOIL	NO. OF HOLES POLES	ANCHORS
DIRT Spoon and Shovel		
DIRT Post hole digger		
MARSHY SOIL		
ROCK Used bar and shovel		
ROCK Used drill and dynamite		
PAVEMENT Sidewalks, etc		
TOTALS		

POLES PLACED

SIZES	POLES	STUBS
TOTALS		

LABOR EMPLOYED

No.	GANG	MEN

Notes: Under "Remarks" report any material not listed above. In no case neglect to report small material such as nails, screws, staples, bolts, etc.

MATERIAL PLACED

Report only work completed on this date

CLASS OF MATERIAL			TOTAL AMOUNT
CROSSARMS	No. of 6 pin ———	No. of 10 pin ———	
GAINS CUT			
THROUGH BOLTS		5/8	
		3/4	
BRACKETS		TYPE	
ATTACHMENTS TO HOUSES	Present Fixtures Placed	TYPE	
		TYPE	
INSULATORS		TYPE	
WIRE, Bare		TYPE	——— KM
WIRE, Covered		TYPE	——— KM
ANCHORS		TYPE	——— EA
GUYS, ANCHOR No. placed ———		Lb. Strand	KM
		Iron wire	KM
GUYS, HEAD No. placed ———		Lb. Strand	KM
		Iron wire	KM

REMARKS

Signed ———

———S. C. U. S. ———, Quadrg Co

Form Used to Report Each Day's Work

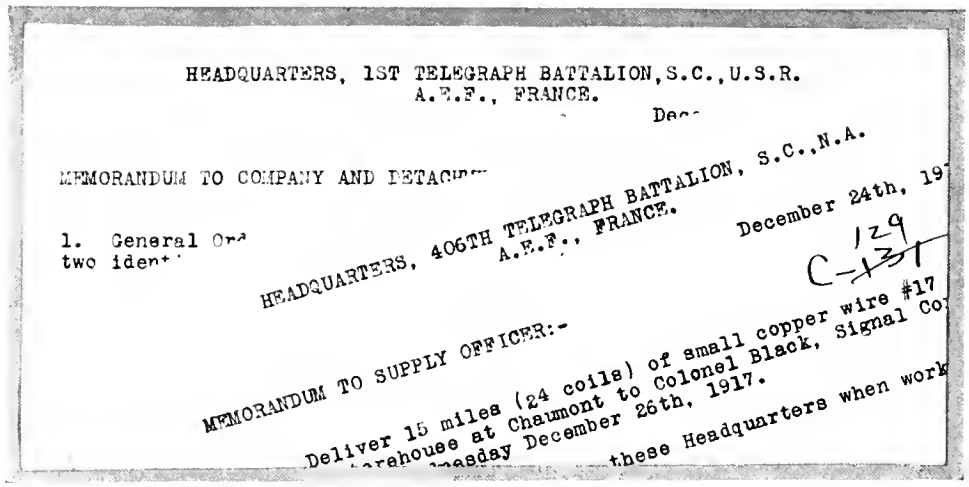
crossarms on the Vaucouleurs line must be immediately removed. It was claimed that they weakened the poles. General Russell, desiring to do everything he could to cooperate with the French, ordered that a new line be built at once and the wishes of the French carried out. After a few more conferences, however, the idea of a new line was abandoned, and the old circuits were retained. One of the difficulties frequently encountered was this lack of coordination between the various French departments. General Headquarters would obtain permission, through the French Mission, from the higher French authorities for doing certain work. About the time the work

was started, a local "Chef de Section" would send for the commander and order it stopped because he had no knowledge of any permission having been given. Sometimes it would take a week or more to get the various authorities together but, in the meantime, the work under one ruse or another was usually continued, so that the conferences interfered little with the actual construction.

About the time that all of the wiring required in the Vaucouleurs area was completed and troops were arriving in large numbers, the French ordered the area vacated by the Americans so it might be occupied by them as an area for *repos*. It was not pleasant thus to have the satisfaction of work accomplished snatched away. But right here the men of the Battalion learned a lesson which, often later, stood them in good stead. Many times the results of hard, grueling labor were lost as soon as the work was done. "*C'est la guerre.*" And the men realized that they were not in France to build telephone lines only. They were there to do their share in wiping out the menace of a Hun victory.

"Hardtack"

The Forty-second Division was transferred from Vaucouleurs to Rolampont, the trip being made on foot. "E" Company had its first experience in Divisional Areas work in the installation of the lines required for training in that area. It was during the hike of the Forty-second that certain weary stragglers from that Division stopped at "E" Company's Frecourt camp and, having been well fed, were tucked away for the night. As a mark of their gratitude, these men on their departure the next morning, presented to Cook Johnson a pup of doubtful parentage which they had been taking with them as a mascot. This was the famous "Hardtack"—the only Battalion mascot which survived to return to America with the organization.



HEADQUARTERS, 1ST TELEGRAPH BATTALION, S.C., U.S.R.
A.E.F., FRANCE.

Dec-

MEMORANDUM TO COMPANY AND DETACH-

1. General Or-
two ident-

HEADQUARTERS, 406TH TELEGRAPH BATTALION, S.C., N.A.
A.E.F., FRANCE.

December 24th, 19-

129
C-131

MEMORANDUM TO SUPPLY OFFICER:-

Deliver 15 miles (24 coils) of small copper wire #17
arehouse at Chaumont to Colonel Black, Signal Co
-esday December 26th, 1917.
these Headquarters when work

Chapter X

Lost—A Perfectly Good Name

EVERY man in the Army is proud of the particular organization to which he is attached. This feeling is well exemplified in the English Army, where regimental names have come down from the Middle Ages. A man "joins up" with an organization which has had a continuous existence for centuries, and his pride in his regiment is secondary only to his love for his country.

The Battalion, while less than a year old, had been "first" in so many things that its members had a very sentimental attachment for the title "First." It was the first Signal Reserve Battalion recruited. The men were proud of the fact and were very well satisfied that it was boldly displayed in the name of the organization.

However, the War Department could pay little attention to sentiment. It was found necessary with the growth of the National Army to renumber the Telegraph Battalions. Thus the First lost its old name, and from December, 1917, it was known officially as the 406th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps. This change well nigh broke the hearts of the men.

And back home the former fellow workers in the Telephone Company heard of the change with anything but pleasure. But it was war time and personal feelings had to be subordinated to the success of the cause. Although known from this time on as the 406th, in the hearts of those who were intimately associated with it and who were so deeply interested in its welfare, it will always be the First Telegraph Battalion.

General Headquarters grew rapidly. The small switchboard soon became inadequate and a larger one was necessary. New equipment consisting of a four-section switchboard was ordered. When received, some of the best installers from the two companies of the 406th were collected for this job—Heilser, Craigmile and Hannam of "D," with Gaghagen, Mumford and Bailey of "E." Day and night, with scarcely a rest, they rushed the work. All of the blueprints and instructions were in French, but the circuits were so complex that even the French representative from the *Postes et Telegraphes* was unable to puzzle them out. Captain Glaspey's assistance with his knowledge of French was invaluable. Mumford was in charge and it was he who directed and completed the wiring of the switchboard. This installation was one of the most important pieces of work done by the Battalion. All of the officers at Headquarters were necessarily exacting in their demands for service. The original boards were hopelessly overloaded, and every one in the Chief Signal Officer's office was most anxious for the completion of the new installation. Captain Paddock from the Signal office kept in close touch with the work.

Switchboard operating was ever becoming more important. None of the men had any training or experience in this branch of signal work, but those who were put at the boards jumped in like old timers. In addition to the operating, these men were compelled to pick up enough French to enable them to carry on necessary business over the French circuits. Sergeant Quinby came back to help for a time. Theriot, the only operator familiar with French, did what he could to impart some of his knowledge to Koser, Roache, Ross, Reid, Thompson, Grimm and the others who were operating. Further to organize the job of switchboard operating, Farrington was taken from "D" Company and stationed at Chaumont, where he brought into play, in the training of the operators and the handling of calls, all of the experience he had gained during his traffic work with the Telephone Company at home. Gaghagen continued as Wire Chief of this office, assisted by Bailey and O. H. McKinney, and Morcom was responsible for the maintenance of the twenty-five kilowatt lighting plant.

The Headquarters telephone exchange building was warm and comfortable, but the sleeping quarters, where the headquarters details lived, were not so pleasant. The unlined wood buildings with dirt floors contained no stoves of any kind, and their inhabitants occupied them only long enough to sleep—crawling under their blankets fully dressed, even to the winter caps and gloves. Recreation time was spent in the Y. M. C. A. hut, or in such entertainment as the city of Chaumont could afford. One evening Grimm, Williams, Richards and Henk became so interested in the French cinema that they were oblivious of the flight of time and, on their way to their "cold storage" barracks, were arrested by the Marine guard for being on the streets after "taps." The Provost Marshal directed that the offenders be escorted to the French

1—Quarters, 2—First Switchboard, 3—Outside Construction, 4—Later Installation.

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

prison and, after a night in a cold musty cell and a prison breakfast, the devotees of the cinema were sentenced to the task of digging graves.

Again Captain Wattles was called upon to give up an officer. This time Lieutenant Lawrence left and was made Signal Officer in London, where he gained a Captaincy and later, as Major, became Signal Officer of one of the Base Ports in France. This left the Battalion very short of officers. The shortage in "D" was, however, relieved when late in December Hasskarl and Price were commissioned Second Lieutenants. The knowledge and reliability of the noncommissioned personnel to a large extent overcame the handicap caused by the shortage of officers which so frequently existed with this organization. But the "noncoms" could not help their commanders in that bane of an officer's existence—censoring mail. It took hours each evening to go over the letters the men had written the night before.

With the organization of the Transportation Department of the Expeditionary Forces came another big job. The artillery barracks at the south end

of Chaumont were wired for this department and switchboards were installed. At the same time telephone equipment was provided for the Roosevelt Hospital located in the same barracks. To connect these switchboards to General Headquarters, a line was built through the town. In the minds of the old construction men, this was the crookedest line on which they had ever worked. Of the seventy poles only ten were in a straight line. The other sixty were "corners," and each required a guy wire. Russell looked after the installation of the several thousand feet of aerial cable required. As was frequently the case, many French signal men were around observing the work, and they were especially interested in the erection of poles by the American method. The French method is to dig a hole with a trench leading down to the bottom of it. The lower end of the pole is then "eased" down the incline. The American method is simply to raise the top of the pole by the use of "pikes" and let the "butt" drop into the hole dug to receive it.

The establishment of an artillery training school at Fort de Pagny, with a range of approximately three by six kilometers, required extensive wiring, and Sergeant Collins was sent, with a detail, to do the work. Several of the circuits were to be run to sentinel posts around the range. During artillery practice all persons could thus be warned by telephone to keep out of the danger zone. A detail of artillerymen was assigned to help Collins carry the materials through the woods and also to assist in stringing the circuits across a lake, which required a two thousand foot span of wire. Every effort was made to complete the installation before the date set for a review. The date for the review however, was advanced one day without Collins being notified, and on January ninth, while the men were installing the last station on the range, a creeping machine gun barrage, as a feature of the review, was started over the heads of the installers. Collins, with Custer and Schmitt, ducked for a group of large trees. The firing continued from one until four o'clock, with the trio shivering in the snow behind sheltering trees. They admitted afterward that it was not a pleasant nor restful three hours.

The problem of keeping the equipment in repair increased in proportion as the lines and switchboards grew in size and number. The work became so heavy that instructions were issued at General Headquarters dividing the responsibilities. To the First Battalion, or rather the "406th," was assigned the maintenance of the Headquarters of Divisions and of the lines north of Langres. Lines in the Divisional Areas, except the trunks leading back to Headquarters, were to be maintained by the Divisions as soon as the Division signal troops arrived. However, signal troops were frequently the last to join the division, and it was necessary in such cases for the 406th to lend details for operation and maintenance.

One cold night in December, a faint voice reported to Neufchateau from Chaumont over the French lines that all of the American circuits were out of

service. This brought memories of "breaks" back home, of times when late at night these very men had rushed out through sleet and rain and snow to restore the service. While the sections were being assembled and the trucks made ready for operation (during this freezing weather, radiators were drained each night), tests from the Neufchateau exchange showed that the lines to Gondrecourt were all right but neither Chaumont nor Bazoilles could be reached. When the trucks were ready, two sections started cautiously down the road, no lights being allowed.

Upon arriving at the railroad bridge over the highway (the *Route Nationale*) the trouble was apparent. A freight train had become derailed and several cars, breaking the iron railing, had fallen from the bridge,

O.C.S.O. FILE NO 330.14/

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER

December 12, 1917.

From : Office Chief Signal Officer, A. E. F.

To : Commanding Officer, 406th Telegraph Battalion.

Subject : Commendation for prompt clearing of trouble on Chaumont-Neufchateau line.

1. On December 11, 1917, an entire section of the Chaumont-Neufchateau lead was broken down by three derailed freight cars falling over the line from the railroad bridge just west of Neufchateau. This trouble was reported to "D" Company of your battalion at 6:59 p. m. and the service was re-established by them at 9:30 p.m.

2. That this was accomplished in so short a time despite the darkness reflects great credit on your command and General Russel wishes you to express his appreciation to the officers and men who performed this duty in such a very creditable manner.

By direction:

J. O. HUBBELL,
Major, S.C., U.S.R.

1st Ind.

HQ., 406th Tel. Bn., N.A., Dec. 15th, 1917 - To C.O. Co. "D" 406th Tel. Bn., N.A.

Forwarded.

By order of Captain Wattles

F.F. Meigs
F.F. Meigs
1st Lieut., S.C.,U.S.R.,
Adjutant.

The "break" on the *Route Nationale*

cutting in their descent all of the wires which passed beneath it. Excited Frenchmen ran hither and thither with dimmed lanterns, and French soldiers formed a cordon across the road, and would allow no one near the wreck. In what French Lieutenant Griest could muster, he explained that at such a time rules meant nothing to the Signal Corps, and the guards were forced to give way. By climbing over the wreckage, the tangle of wires was quickly cut away, linemen using handflash lamps tied to their caps. Temporary lengths of wire were used to repair the

damaged circuits. All of the lines were working within an hour and a half from the time the report was received in the barracks.

On the following morning this incident was reported to Major Hubbell. He mentioned to General Russell that the service had been interrupted the evening before and had been reestablished at 8:30.

"You mean 8:30 this morning?" the General asked. When assured that the circuits were cleared at 8:30 the evening before, the General directed that a letter of commendation be addressed to the Battalion.

A let-up in the training area work gave Company "D" an opportunity to work on the line leading south from Neufchateau toward Langres, "E" Company having been working steadily on the lower end of this line with Frecourt still as a base. The soil around Neufchateau was extremely rocky. Following the highway to Langres would have required a great number of holes in almost solid rock, which would have been a simple matter with pneumatic drills, but drilling by hand was almost out of the question.

The first five kilometers of the line were almost inaccessible from the highways, and it seemed much better to distribute material from the railroad than to attempt the distribution from the highways. Lieutenant Shirley Price had an interesting time on this job. There were delays in getting permission for a special train, and delays in getting the train started after it was loaded. In time, however, it did get started, and the poles, crossarms and other equipment were delivered along the route from the moving train.

While the material was being delivered, the construction men hiked along the railway to the spots where they were to dig the holes. Fearing that the ground might soon become frozen and stay so for the winter, every effort was spent on completing the holes, leaving the erection of the poles until the digging was finished. This decision proved an unfortunate one. Other work of a more urgent nature was required before the poles could be set and work on the railway abandoned for several weeks. When, in February, the line was tackled again, most of the holes had become filled by the rains and thaws. Much of the work had to be repeated.

During December the 406th was again called upon for a man to go to another branch of the Army. Just as Christmas plans were being talked over, Sergeant Bradford, who had been of inestimable help throughout the formation of the Battalion and who, in France, had run headquarters affairs in such a way that the Battalion commander was required to give little thought to that end of the work, was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Adjutant General's Department, and assigned to the First Division for a period of training. Later he was detailed with General March at Camp Valdahon and joined the 42nd or "Rainbow" Division in February. Bradford continued with the 42nd throughout the war and while it was in Germany as a part of the "Army of Occupation," returning to America in May 1919, as a First Lieutenant.

CHAPTER XI

The First Christmas

IN THE preceding pages an effort has been made to give some account of the work and the play, the hardships and the pleasures of the men of the Battalion. If the holidays seem rather prominent, it is perhaps because the work was of such a strenuous nature that in the minds of the men an occasional jollification stood out by contrast.

It may not be amiss to stop a moment while plans are being made for celebrating the first Christmas in the A. E. F., and briefly consider what the men had accomplished in four months of foreign service. The most important piece of work perhaps was General Pershing's Headquarters at Chaumont, which had been equipped with complete telephone and lighting plants. These for some time were operated and were still being kept in repair by the Battalion. Pole lines had been built and circuits strung from a point twenty-five kilometers south of Chaumont, north via Headquarters and Neufchateau to Vaucouleurs. A direct line from Langres to Neufchateau was under construction. A number of shorter lines to various training areas from Neufchateau and Chaumont had been built. In fact, the entire area surrounding Neufchateau was thoroughly covered by American lines. Many training areas had been equipped with complete telephone facilities. Much of this widely scattered plant had been operated and all of it kept in repair for shorter or longer periods by the Battalion.

The Christmas celebration of the Battalion began back in Pennsylvania.

At Mr. Kinnard's suggestion, seconded by practically every employee of the Company, boxes were placed in the various offices of the Company, into which all who desired might deposit money for the purpose of sending Christmas boxes to the men overseas. The limit was a quarter from any one person.

When the money was all gathered in Mr. Wisse's office (he was Treasurer of the committee in charge of the fund), it was found to total $1,543.00. Not only the men in the Signal Battalions, but every "mother's son" who had entered the service from the Bell organization, was to receive a Christmas box. "Raw" materials, consisting of tobacco, cigarettes, plum pudding, jelly, gum, chocolate, tooth brushes, soap, nuts, and other things which every man in the service could use, were purchased.

All employees were asked to write letters to any former employee with whom they were acquainted and who was now in the service. The sorting of letters, and the packing of boxes for the six hundred and fifty men to receive them, turned the Bell offices topsy turvy for weeks. All of the boxes, with their packets of letters attached were dispatched in plenty of time to reach the men—provided submarine or other disaster was not met—before the holidays.

The thought of Christmas away from home is never pleasant. Separation from home ties by several thousand miles of ocean adds nothing to the joy of the season. Being part of an Army in war time, and little knowing what the future holds forth—how soon, if ever, there will be an opportunity to get into the thick of it, instead of everlastingly digging holes, raising poles and stringing wire—it would seem that such thoughts would make Christmas, 1917, for the members of the 406th Telegraph Battalion a day of indigo hue.

Contents of a Christmas Box

But such was not the case. Committees were appointed early in the month and preparations started for having rousing parties on Christmas Day. The boxes had been arriving, not only for the men who had formerly been employees, but also for those transferred to the Battalion from other organizations. A real job it was to restrain the impulse to take "just one peep" into the boxes before Christmas Day.

On the day before Christmas, those who could get away scoured the woods in the neighborhood of the camps and returned with evergreen boughs and huge branches of mistletoe. The mess halls took on a Christmas air. The

1—Bugler Fest Calls Co. "E" 2—Ready for the Attack 3—Christmas in Marnay

section chiefs and sergeants volunteered for "K. P." duty, and the entire night before Christmas was spent in roasting the turkeys and baking innumerable pies. The mess fund boxes received at Union League were again tapped, as the Quartermaster was unable to supply what the men thought was a sufficient supply of turkey and trimmings for a real Christmas dinner.

The Christmas was far from a selfish one. Early in the morning Company "E" gave a party for about forty children at Marnay. A regular American Christmas tree was set up in the schoolhouse. It was covered with toys and other presents on a background of snow, the latter probably from the stores of cotton in Lieutenant Macfarlan's dispensary. The ceremonies opened with two set speeches by the youngsters, who thanked the Americans for this first real Christmas since the war started. Presents were distributed—there were enough for two "rounds"—and there was considerably more noise with tin horns and rattles than the room could comfortably hold. The people of Marnay seemed unable to express fully their gratitude for the kindly thoughtfulness of the men of Company "E."

Lieutenant Suddath collected all of his company at Marnay, work being suspended both by the Frecourt detachment, which was pushing the Langres-Neufchateau line northward, and by Lieutenant Foust's crews, who were on the big job in the Chaumont artillery barracks. Those who could be spared from the exchanges at General Headquarters and Langres also wended their way toward Marnay, and at noon Company "E," with the Battalion Headquarters Detachments, assembled in the little mess room. Evergreen and lanterns covered walls and ceilings and the white tables were strewn with fruit and nuts and "smokes." Outside there was enough snow everywhere to suit the most exacting requirements. Vance, who was still handling Company "E's" mess, produced the meal of his life, and for three solid hours that crowd of healthy soldiers stuffed away a seemingly endless supply of turkey and cranberries, sweet potatoes and pies. As the enthusiasm for food subsided, speeches and songs held sway well into the evening.

Co. "D" at Neufchateau

Company "D" gathered at Neufchateau. The Battalion officers were invited to dine with Company "D," and Major Hubbell, now at General Headquarters, was included in the party. Just about the time for dinner, the Chaumont detachments arrived, bringing with them a large batch of mail, which did not in the least detract from the party. Unfortunately, early on that fine snowy morning, Carlson had to go to the hospital, there to spend a dismal Christmas with a case of measles.

As an innovation, the sergeants had volunteered to act as waiters, and a busy time they had. After appetites were appeased, a letter of greeting from Mr. Kinnard was read, and it brought forth wild cheers. Lieutenant Hasskarl had been appointed Chief Cook, and this overheated officer was dragged forth from the kitchen by Master of Ceremonies Brittain to make a bow and receive a round of hearty applause. A detail from the 101st Infantry band furnished music for the occasion, and the quality of the music may be judged from the fact that the leader had formerly been an assistant director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Lutz and Murdaugh had visited a cafe at Liffol le Grande and borrowed a mechanical piano of ancient lineage, and to make the party complete, there was a real piano which Thevelin had borrowed

from a neighbor. Murdaugh sat on the mechanical piano to hold it down while Dobbie turned the crank. Before the celebration ended the children from the neighborhood were invited into the barracks to see the decorations and incidentally to strip the tree of its trimmings.

The first Christmas in the American Expeditionary Forces was a thing of the past. Was it a success? If noise and laughter is a criterion, the answer must be decidedly in the affirmative. Was there any homesickness? If there was, it was carefully concealed behind smiling countenances. Deep down in the hearts of all was a feeling that although they were far from home, the people back in the "States" were thinking of them, and missing them just as much and perhaps more, than they themselves missed the home ties.

CHAPTER XII

Nearing the Battle Line

DURING the Autumn of 1917 many telephone and telegraph lines had been built by the various signal troops of the American forces. Early in the winter, as these lines spread out to take care of the arriving troops, plans were made at General Headquarters to coordinate, unify and systematize the network of wires. At Neufchateau the old Divisional Areas organization was supplanted by the "Advance Section, Lines of Communication," and this later became Advance Section, Services of Supply, or "S. O. S."

Neufchateau became increasingly important and a signal officer was placed there, Major Kelly being assigned to the post. He was a great big warm-hearted Irishman and he became very popular. There were no experienced signal men in his outfit, and he borrowed several men from the Battalion. Banholzer held down the telegraph key at Neufchateau, while other men from both Companies carried on the telegraph and telephone business at Langres.

Major Kelly had a definiteness about his way of giving orders which showed that he meant business. Gallo and Drew who were in the Langres office had one interesting experience with the Major. The scarcity of telephone instruments made it necessary that they be installed only where absolutely necessary for war business. One evening Major Kelly happened to overhear a conversation from the Y. M. C. A. telephone which seemed to indicate that a telephone at that location was not of primary importance in licking the Hun.

Turning toward Gallo who, with Drew, was working in the office, he asked:

"Who put that telephone in at the 'Y'?"

"A Field Battalion, Sir," replied Gallo.

"Very well, as soon as you're through there, you fellows go down and yank it out."

When Gallo and Drew arrived at the hut and explained their mission, the Y. M. C. A. worker called up Major Kelly and began:

"This is—— and I am a friend of Senator—"

"Well," interrupted the Major, "this is Major Kelly; politics don't count in the Army."

Bang! Up went his receiver. Gallo and Drew returned with the telephone.

The headquarters of the various centers along the lines of communication needed many signal men for their permanent forces. It required constant effort to prevent the loss from the Battalion of its experienced men. Nevertheless, Noonan and O'Brien were permanently transferred from "D" Company and remained in the telegraph office at Paris. Keyes, the motor sergeant of Company "E," after establishing with the help of Schmidt and V. P. King the Signal Corps garage at General Headquarters, was taken from the Battalion and permanently assigned to the Signal Corps at Nevers. Sergeant George remained permanently at Chaumont in charge of the telegraph office and kept with him Flaherty and Kayser. Atwood and Smith of "E," and McNichol and Parks of "D," were permanently transferred to run a telegraph office in London, and Theriot, one of the best telephone operators of Company "E," who spoke French fluently was taken to operate the telephone exchange at Versailles. Besides these men who were permanently lost there were a number of men temporarily detached for operating telephone and telegraph offices and doing miscellaneous maintenance work at Chaumont, Langres and Neufchateau.

All these losses made it necessary to secure authority from the Chief Signal Officer to request details from troops stationed in areas in which signal work was being done, to help the telephone men with their construction. At Morlancourt for example, a detail of Infantry with a few of Brittain's noncommissioned officers erected the poles which connected this town to Bovee, whence the wires ran on French poles through Void to Vaucouleurs. Collins as has been mentioned, constructed the line from Chaumont to Jonchery with a detail of men borrowed from the Engineers and when later he installed the signal system at Fort de Pagny, the bulk of the labor was provided by details from the Artillery. At Bourmont, to enable the Second Division to complete the installation work, Woodward with Long directed the new construction and maintenance required by Colonel Carr, most of the actual work being done by details of Marines furnished through the cooperation of Lieutenant Wood, Signal Officer of the Fifth Regiment of Marines.

The Road into Menil la Tour

At Neufchateau a large detail was borrowed from the 101st Signal Battalion, 26th Division. These latter came to feel that they were part of the 406th and were loath to return to their organization when orders to that effect were received.

Early in January it was decided to move the First Division toward the front to prepare to take over an American sector northwest of Toul. There was so much work to be done in organizing the sector proper that signal troops were required to provide lines between the new Division Headquarters at Menil la Tour and the American telephone lines. Company "D" was given the job. It was determined to provide three talking circuits and to equip the line also for telegraph service over the same wires. Work on the northern end of the Neufchateau-Langres line was immediately suspended. Lieutenant Hasskarl with his platoon was despatched to Pagny sur Meuse to work toward Vaucouleurs and Menil la Tour, while Lieutenant Price worked his platoon out of Neufchateau, rebuilding the lines to Vaucouleurs. These latter had been placed along the French railroad, and in a month without attention, except such doubtful repairs as the French made while maintaining their own circuits on the same poles, had depreciated to such an extent as to require almost entire reconstruction. The Meuse River, which was an extremely small and innocent looking stream when the line had been built along the railroad in the Fall, had on account of the snows, the rains and the

constant freezing and thawing, not only overflowed its banks but covered an area a mile or more in width and throughout most of the length of its valley. At places between Coussy and Maxey it was necessary to travel ten or fifteen miles in order to reach a point only a mile away. While Lieutenant Price was battling with the flood, Lieutenant Hasskarl and his platoon were

The Meuse Overflows its Banks

stringing wires along the French railroad line between Vaucouleurs and Pagny, and on another French pole line along the highway to Menil la Tour. The weather was probably the worst which was encountered throughout the whole bitter winter and on account of the extremely short time allowed for the completion of the work, construction was continued from daylight until dark in the snow, sleet and rain. The "eight-hour day" was a standing joke—eight hours before dinner and eight hours after.

The small town of Pagny was occupied by a battalion of French artillery and there were few unoccupied billets, but the Zone Major did his best to provide for Lieutenant Hasskarl's platoon, the first Americans to reach the town. A large loft and a stable were cleared and Tomlinson set up his cook stove to help keep the men warm. During the night the floor caught fire under the stove and a bucket brigade was organized which poured "*beaucoup*" water on the blaze. The floor leaked and the whole French Army—or so it seemed—must have been sleeping beneath and charged up to the loft to find out the reason for the shower. Near-French explanations were in order. Later in the night snow sifted through the many openings in the roof, and in the morning the sleepers found that in addition to their army blankets they were covered by a three-inch blanket of snow. But nobody complained of the life. Althouse made his daily trips from Neufchateau with the food and Tomlinson kept the fire going and furnished a plentiful supply of Indian meal porridge and bacon and coffee.

Toward the end of this job the French moved many of their men out of

Pagny, and Lieutenant Hasskarl was able to secure what he thought were far superior billets. They looked comfortable. The men thought they were in luck. But it was only an hour or so before Tritle reached inside his shirt to dig around and find out what was going on in there. Then Haislop became uncomfortable. He seemed restless. One after another the men developed a general uneasiness of demeanor, and then each began digging at various parts of his anatomy.

There had been cootie stories which had lightened many an evening in camp. But here was the real thing. And the humor had all gone out of the subject—so much so, in fact, that Lieutenant Macfarlan was given a hurry-up call. His detail used kerosene and boiling water to good effect.

The circuits were finished so quickly that General Gibbs, who had taken a keen personal interest in the job and had visited Pagny frequently throughout its construction, complimented the men. The Chief Signal Officer, too, had been following the work with special interest and upon its completion ordered a telegram of congratulation despatched to Company "D."

Maj. General Gibbs

Through the winter months the linemen worked faithfully, rarely complaining of the weather, and always having in mind the necessity of the work. But no amount of willingness and spirit and cheer on the part of the linemen would have produced results without the faithful motor sections. The chauffeurs, with the assistance of the shop gangs, kept their trucks and motorcycles in tip-top condition. Day after day they drove them along ice covered roads in snow and sleet with no other protection than they could improvise from half a shelter tent or a poncho. The motorcycle men had a particularly hard time.

In keeping up the morale of the American forces, regularity in the mail service was second in importance only to food and clothing. For the 406th Sergeant Magill organized a daily service between Marnay and Chaumont and in rain or shine, snow or sleet, McKee made his trips by motorcycle over this route. One day, however, he collided with a truck which resulted in a prolonged stay in the hospital. Upon his discharge from the hospital he was lost to the Battalion, being transferred to another outfit.

The flooded condition of the Meuse valley began to threaten the main pole line from Neufchateau to the south. The Mayor of Neufchateau had told the truth. The innocent little stream of the Autumn became a turbulent

1, 3, 8—Some of the Motor Men. 2—Dad McCann Finds a Souvenir.

4, 5, 6, 7—"Look Pleasant, Please!"

At Montigny

flood. Poles which had seemed safe in high and dry locations were now surrounded with six feet or more of swirling water carrying with it huge cakes of ice. The safety of this line was so threatened that a few men were taken from the First Division work to run emergency circuits along the trees bordering the flood. These circuits were so arranged that in case any of the poles fell, the new wires could be quickly placed in service. A patrol was kept on duty to take care of any such emergency. When the waters began to recede, human chains were formed and the linemen waded out to the poles to attach guys to those which had been most severely threatened. This work was so important, and so few men could be spared from the Menil la Tour line, that a call was sent for help, and a detachment from Frecourt, where "E" was still working on the Neufchateau line, was despatched to Neufchateau. These men, under Dickson, hurried north thinking that they were about to enter into active and dangerous territory. Although disappointed when they found out that they were still a number of kilometers from the front, they set to work guying all of the threatened poles to guard against the coming of another flood. To help with the work, Donbaugh, anxious to try his Susquehanna boatsmanship commandeered an old boat which had come down the stream. While he was standing in the craft, it became loosed from its mooring to a pole and started to float down the stream. The sailor-lineman reached out and grasped one of the circuits. The boat had gained such speed that Donbaugh, before recovering from his surprise, was lifted by his hold on the wire and dropped unceremoniously into the flood. His companions pulled him out but the boat was no more. When the flood had receded sufficiently, triangular wood cribs were built on the up-stream side of the poles which had been most severely battered by ice and debris. It was with a feeling of security that the next flood was awaited.

After the accident to the main trunk lines caused by the freight train jumping off the bridge south of Neufchateau, Company "D" manufactured from ten pairs of wire an emergency cable which was coiled on two old reels so that it could be placed in the middle of a break and the cable run off simultaneously in both directions. The period of excessive snow and rain and thaw cleared off suddenly on Sunday, January twentieth, with a terrific wind which seemed to

threaten many of the lines. The ground was so extremely soft that in many places poles were rocking and shortly after noon mess a call came by way of a French trunk, announcing that again all of the circuits to Chaumont were out of service. This was the first Sunday holiday observed in weeks, but every man in the company wanted to be assigned to the job. Only one section could be allowed to go, the other three to remain at the barracks to be ready for other troubles should they arise. The emergency cable was loaded on a truck. Beyond St. Blin it was discovered that a large tree had been blown across the wires and that Company "E" men from Chaumont were already on the job with enough material to make a temporary repair. Twenty minutes later the ten-wire line was in service again.

Private John J. Hollowell

Work on the upper end of the much delayed Neufchateau-Langres line had been suspended in the rush to complete the circuits to Menil la Tour. After this latter job was completed, late in January, a conference was held in Neufchateau at which the relative importance of all of the work then in hand was discussed. Colonel Voris of the First Division, Major Kelly of the Advance Section, S. O. S., Major Hubbell from General Headquarters, with the Battalion officers talked over the various propositions which were under consideration, and it was decided to begin to gather the 406th Battalion together to care for the forward work which seemed imminent. About this time there was a rumor that the Battalion was to be assigned to the newly formed First Army Corps.

Neufchateau was selected as Battalion Headquarters and those men who had not been permanently transferred assembled from Chaumont, Langres, Nevers and all the way back to St. Nazaire. Company "D" had been living in comfortable quarters in a French garage but gave up this space for the Headquarters and Supply Detachments. An elderly woman, Madame Garcin, the widow of a French General and who fifty years before had lived in America, offered her garage, which was across the street, for billets for the Headquarters men. This made most

comfortable quarters. The two Companies found other quarters in the town.

While the Battalion was gathering at Neufchateau preparatory to more active service, a section of "E" Company remained at Montigny continuing its work on the Langres line, and once more Company "D" started working on the upper end. To add to the convenience of delivering men to the job a billet was obtained from the 23rd Infantry at St. Thibault and Lutz and Spears were despatched to that town. These men gave the billet the "once over" and pleaded for tents and cots which they might set up in a snow-covered field. Their request was granted and the tents arrived in the evening at the end of a hard day's work. Ground was cleared and tents and stoves set up. The snow soon thawed within the tents but in the morning axes, crow-bars, hammers and chisels were brought into play to loose the cots, boots and shoes which were solidly frozen into the ground.

* * * * *

It was at this time that the Battalion experienced its first fatal casualty. On February eleventh, as one of the sections was traveling to the storeroom at Rebeval barracks, the chain holding the tail gate of a truck parted, and Hollowell and Underwood of Company "D," fell to the ground. Hollowell, who had fallen on his head, was at once taken to the hospital and Underwood returned to camp. Officers from the Battalion went immediately to the hospital and found that everything possible was being done to care for the injured man who seemed to be resting comfortably. That night the last report was that he seemed to be improving. The next morning however, he died. Except for Major Glaspey who died of pneumonia in November, 1918, this was the only death in the Battalion.

Hollowell's Grave

Arrangements were made for a proper burial and on the afternoon of the thirteenth the entire Company formed and accompanied the truck upon which was placed the flag-covered casket, to the little American graveyard at Rouceux.

* * * * *

Early in February, Major Hubbell was relieved from duty at General Headquarters and ordered to rejoin the Battalion. He resumed command on the evening of the thirteenth and shortly afterward Captain Wattles and

Lieutenant Macfarlan set off for a "leave" at Nice. Orders had been issued for the preparation of leave schedules for the men of both Companies. But the work continually interfered and the only enlisted man in the Battalion to have a real seven-days' leave before the armistice was Miller of Company "D" who, while on detached service at General Headquarters, was granted a special leave.

The Major, in anticipation of important work ahead, arranged for the release of all members of the Battalion from work in the area south of Neufchateau and once more the Neufchateau-Langres line was left unfinished. By this time, however, it was nearing completion and it was finished by old friends of the Second, now the "407th."

Chapter XIII

With the First Army Corps

GENERAL Order No. 9, issued from General Headquarters on January fifteenth, 1918, created the First American Army Corps. Not since the close of the Civil War had there been such an organization. Major-General Hunter Liggett was named as Corps Commander, and the First, Second, Twenty-sixth and Forty-second Divisions were assigned for line duty, and the Forty-first as Base and Training Division. There were also a number of artillery, signal, engineer, air observation, and pursuit troops, cavalry, and a replacement Division, making a total of approximately 170,000 men. At a later date, the permanent assignment of Divisions to a Corps was discontinued, the main body of the Corps consisting of troops temporarily placed under its tactical or administrative command.

On January twentieth, the First Corps with headquarters at Neufchateau, began to carry out General Order No. 9 and took over the administrative command of the First Division which was in line in the Xivray-Flirey sector, and shortly afterward of the Second Division holding the sector between Dieue and Spada, the Forty-second Division holding the Luneville-Baccarat sector, and the Twenty-sixth Division then along the Chemin-des-Dames. Each of the Divisions remained for the present under the tactical command of the various French Corps to which they had been assigned.

On February seventeenth, the 406th was assigned as the First Corps

Telegraph Battalion and, in anticipation of the very important work to be done at Corps Headquarters all of the equipment was carefully gone over so that everything would be in shape for tackling any assignment. While Company "E" was building a new line from Neufchateau to Void, Company "D" reported for temporary duty to the Signal Officer of the First Division.

During the week prior to the movement of Company "D," a conference was held with Major Schwartz, First Division Signal Officer. It was learned that it was his idea to split the Company into many small details, working throughout the Division, so that he might collect the men of his Divisional Field Signal Battalion for handling new construction. Strenuous objections were made to this plan. The Battalion Officers would not agree that any similar organization of the A. E. F. could do better work than the men of the 406th. A discussion of the matter convinced the Division Officers that the 406th would produce far more satisfactory work under its own officers than if it were split into details scattered around with various units. Orders were issued to that effect. At this time Captain Gauss was released from General Headquarters and returned to his old organization as Engineer Officer at Battalion Headquarters.

Maj. General Hunter Liggett

Washington's Birthday was approaching, and an order was issued from General Headquarters directing that this holiday be observed by all A. E. F. troops except those actually engaged in combat with the enemy. For the 406th, Chief Entertainer "Jerry" Hamilton was instructed to produce the talent and put on a show. The Battalion collected in the large assembly room of the Y. M. C. A. hut at Neufchateau. A mandolin quartet, Buehler, Ricciardi, Gardiner and Hale, responded to repeated encores. "Jerry" was on the program with his famous pantomime poker game, with his "black-face" stunts, with songs, and as end man with Sebring in a minstrel show which brought down the house. Dobbie resurrected an "O. D." blanket from which he made a Scotch Kiltie costume to give "local color" to his dialect stories.

Thevelin induced a part of the Seventy-seventh French Infantry Band to play between the vaudeville acts.

As the time was near at hand when the Battalion was to see actual fighting, it was necessary to dispose of quantities of excess baggage. Prior to this time the different camps and billets had been of a semi-permanent nature, which tended to encourage the accumulation of "junk" of various descriptions. There were loud lamentations when the miscellaneous assortment of boxes and trunks, with much of their contents, were discarded.

Company "D" started for the new location on February twenty-eighth in a pouring rain. Lieutenant Price with Lutz and his construction gang and several telephone and telegraph operators set off for Gondrecourt, there

Boucq

to take over the operation of the switchboard at the rear echelon of the First Division, and to do such bolstering up and rebuilding as the hastily constructed telephone plant in that vicinity required. The remainder of the Company proceeded to Boucq.

The only available billet for the company at Boucq was a wooden barracks which had not been appropriated by any of the divisional troops because one end was open to the weather, and because it boasted no floor except mother earth. In dry weather, when this home was selected, the grass-covered floor looked possible but when the trucks with the mess equipment arrived it was raining, and the prospective billet appeared almost hopeless. It was, as one of the wags remarked, "A fine place for submarines, but h—— for sleeping." Erb gave one glance at the open end of the shack where he was expected to set up his kitchen and almost "passed out." But with

characteristic good nature the mess crew was soon established in the mud.

The train which was to transport the men as far as Toul was to leave Neufchateau at one o'clock. As a matter of fact it did not get started until five. Early in the evening snow began to fall and by the time Toul was reached a blizzard was raging. It took nine hours to make the forty-kilometer trip. Nothing could have been more appreciated than the plentiful supply of hot chocolate and sandwiches which were generously distributed by the Red Cross workers, Miss Andrews and her assistant. Cowan tells of the men's appreciation:

> "I have dined at the *Café de la Paix* in Paris, in one of the best *café* of Lyons, and in private houses without number. I have begged meals from all kinds of outfits, from colored labor battalions to officers' messes; but the food that I was most thankful for was the chocolate and sandwiches from the girls who had waited for us in snow and sleet for five hours. It was given with a smile and we were made to feel that we were doing them a favor by eating the things they had for us."

The car containing the cots and blankets was shifted from the station into the freight yard. It seemed hours before it was placed where it could be unloaded. The remainder of the journey was made by truck. A batch of mail had been brought up to Boucq from Neufchateau and this, together with the steak and potatoes and coffee which Dailey had been keeping hot for hours, put new cheer into the gang. By two o'clock the entire camp, including those in tents pitched near the barracks, had settled down.

These men were still amateurs in the war game. At six the next morning they had their first taste of gun fire. A barrage put over by the Germans against American troops in the trenches was the first real cannonading the Signal men had heard. It seemed very close, and as Cowan puts it:

> "A few months later, we worked beside artillery at Chateau Thierry, and in September we heard the roar of the barrage which started the St. Mihiel offensive, probably the greatest artillery operation during the entire war, but none of these gave us the thrill that we experienced that first night in the mud of Boucq."

During that barrage, which preceded a German attempt at raiding the American trenches, the troops of the First Division gave such a good account of themselves that the Commander of the Thirty-second French Corps issued a general order congratulating the Americans on their "superb energy and coolness." Although the men of the 406th had taken no part in the action, their chests swelled when they read their copy of the order, as they realized that they were now with the forces actually facing the enemy.

Knowing that Boucq was close to the front, Lieutenant Macfarlan had accompanied the outfit and with Lieutenant Hasskarl and the star "rustler"

Montsec in the Background

Pemberton, helped to get the camp in shape the next morning by covering the worst of the puddles with corrugated iron. No reveille was sounded that morning except for a detachment taken to Menil la Tour, or "Maxey" as it was called in code, for duty in the listening posts. Meantime, Lieutenant Griest tramped through the snowy woods with Major Schwartz, studying routes for various lines to be constructed to Regimental Headquarters. The Major did not realize that he now had a "Battalion of Experts" and his plan was to explain the work to be done and to furnish from time to time, what material he believed would be required. It was explained that if he would show just where the lines were to be built and the type of construction which he desired, Company "D" would estimate and requisition the materials required and go ahead with the construction. After two days of close supervision, Major Schwartz not only gave the Company blanket approval to draw from his stores any supplies required, but also asked that certain of his senior noncommissioned officers be allowed to travel around with Kraus who was making the surveys and plans and with the construction details, to gain experience.

While lines toward the front were being surveyed and material for these collected, Jensen and his section erected two circuits between the French exchange at Toul and the First Division switchboard at "Maxey." These circuits were placed on French poles, and went up as if by magic, a few days respite from construction work having given the crowd a surplus of energy.

The forward circuits were tackled with a will. On this line there were no rights of way to be considered. Speed of construction and accessibility for quick repairs were the chief factors, and the line led straight across fields from the hill at Boucq, toward the woods to the north, always in plain view of the commanding Boche positions at Montsec. Fortunately no rock was encountered in the digging of holes. The poles provided were rather light, but this was not a time for argument and they were used. The line terminated in the woods south of Ansauville, and one branch ran to a dugout at Raulecourt. Another ran into Ansauville, connecting with a line being erected by the Division Signal Battalion.

Lieut. Col. William F. Repp

While rushing this line to the north the whole countryside was crowded with troops: infantry going to or returning from the trenches, engineers working on highways or railroads, and others distributing ammunition which, by night, was hauled into the woods on the little narrow-gauge trains or "light railways." No lights were allowed on the trucks in this neighborhood, as it was necessary to conceal all movements as much as possible; nor were "Klaxons" permitted, because horns were used to warn of gas attacks. Colored labor troops were working in the vicinity gathering fuel from the woods. They kept up a constant chatter. Seeing an engineer, one inquired of Donbaugh:

"Say, boss, ah knows dem fellahs wid crossed guns on theyah collahs am infantry, and dem fellahs wid de crossed flags is signal men, but who is dem wid de hotels on theyah collahs?"

Another dusky was chatting with Spangler when a group of

French Colonials, probably from Morocco or Algiers, passed along the road. The laborer called out to one of the Colonials:

"Whah's you from, babe?"

"Je ne comprends pas," replied the Colonial. Whereupon the mystified darkey gasped:

"Damn ef theyah aint ah niggah whah' doan know his own lanwidge."

Before the forward line had been completed it was decided to increase the number of circuits. "Repp insulators" were used. In his early days in France, Captain Repp devised a crossarm which was an improvement on

Men of the 26th Division Entering Toul Sector to Relieve the 1st Division

the type used by the Allies. The ordinary crossarm is heavy and Repp figured that much cargo space could be saved and much hard work eliminated without sacrificing any efficiency by using arms of regulation length, but just heavy enough to last the couple of years during which the lines were expected to serve. A lineman could swing a whole bundle of the new arms over his shoulder and carry them. At the same time Repp devised a new insulator which, instead of screwing over a wooden knob on the crossarm, had a projecting iron screw which could be driven directly into the wooden crossarm. Crossarms therefore were merely straight sticks of wood and the insulators were very readily attached by driving the screw partly into the crossarm and then turning it a couple of times to pull it down tight. These became familiar to all Signal troops as "Repp crossarms" and "Repp insulators." Repp also devised simpler methods of attaching the crossarms to the poles.

The work which Repp was doing at General Headquarters was not of the spectacular type and its importance but little realized in the field. He was

promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and certainly would have gone higher had not the Germans quit in November. He was awarded the American Distinguished Service Medal:

> "For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services. With his valuable assistance the Signal Corps was enabled originally to plan for the immense network of the United States Army telegraph and telephone lines now existing in France. To him is attributable the exceptionally high standard of efficiency attained by the telephone and telegraph service. As chief signal officer, Advance Section Services of Supply, his services have been marked by a character of exceptional excellence."

That his work was known to our Allies is evidenced by the fact that he was honored by the English as a "Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George"; by the French as a "Chevalier of the Legion of Honor," and he was recommended by the Italian General Headquarters for an Italian medal. It can be seen that the influence of his work was widespread.

The work went ahead with such speed and enthusiasm that in nine days the whole job was done. The Divisional Signal Officer had estimated that it would take three weeks to put up the originally planned two-crossarm line and circuits to Toul. Not only was this work completed in nine days but three additional arms with their wires as well. A number of records were made. One morning, in three hours Long and Noone completed eighteen five-foot deep holes. Another time Jensen's section, with four men climbing and four ground men, strung forty-eight half-mile coils of wire in eight hours. The officers of the First Division learned that there was no joke in the term "experts" when applied to the 406th.

On the Sunday after the line was completed, General Russell with General Gibbs and other officers reached Boucq to look it over. General Russell stood on the hill from which the first half of the line could be seen as it stretched across the country toward the *Foret de la Reine*. He rubbed his hands and enthusiastically exclaimed, "That's the kind of work that is a credit to the Telegraph Battalions and you will all be doing a lot more of it before this war is over."

Aeroplane activity was almost constant, the German planes flying over the lines every morning in the midst of terrific anti-aircraft attacks. "What goes up must come down," and the falling shrapnel made steel helmets popular. During one attack, Jensen who was stringing circuits near Raulecourt discovered that he had left his helmet in the truck. Did he run back and get it? Not he. A coil of wire on his head, he stuck to the job.

On account of the increasing artillery and airplane activity, all troops quartered in Menil and Boucq were ordered to prepare either caves or shelter trenches into which to retire in case of bombardment. No caves were avail-

able at Boucq and all the construction men were kept on the line. The first sergeant, mess sergeant, company clerk and two or three of the mechanics dug a trench. An attempt was made to enlist the services of the official interpreter Thevelin, but that worthy after rummaging through his effects produced a certificate from French Headquarters stating that because of wounds received while in the trenches, he was incapable of performing any physical labor. That let him out of the work but did not prevent his fellows from telling him that during bombardment he would enjoy it in the open.

Living with the First Division was satisfactory in many ways. Supplies came regularly and the daily allotments of rations were liberal. But the pay for February was slow in arriving and sociable games in the evening were out of the question, as the January pay long since had gravitated by way of the cards or "bones" to the pockets of a few. So in the evenings all joined in the general singing, led by the mandolin "ticklers," Hale, Buehler and Walkup. Erb's monologue as a circus "barker" and Hale's weird musical instrument, made of a stick and cigar box with a single string, helped to pass the time. The star shells and showers of tracer bullets from the machine guns of the airplanes made a beautiful sight as they lightened the heavens. Occasionally, the men who returned from duty in the listening posts, the most dangerous work the Battalion had yet been called upon to do, consented to tell of their experiences in No Man's Land. Many of the auditors were anxious to be assigned to this work while others were more conservative. As one of the latter put it:

"You fellows can do all the bragging you want. When I'm told to go, I'll go, but 'til then I'm going to stay right here. I'm not anxious to meet any undertaker until I have to."

When the work north of Boucq had been finished and Murdaugh had completed a switchboard in the old Chateau at Boucq, First Division plans were changing. As "D" Company's camp was in an exposed location, it was decided during the lull to move to the little town of Laneuveville which was sheltered by a friendly hill from sight of the enemy at Montsec.

Chapter XIV

One Thing After Another

"CORPORAL LEON," a little French boy, attached himself to the Battalion during the winter. Spears gives a picture of this interesting youngster: "During our first winter in France a young French kid about eleven years old wished himself on us as mascot. Early in the war he had lost both his father and mother. He had been up with some French outfit and had been wounded, and came to us dressed up in his little French sky-blue uniform, wound and service stripes and a corporal's chevron. He was just such a kid as one would expect him to be after his associations with a crowd of soldiers—wise beyond his years, resourceful and self-reliant, pretty tough for a kid, but a likable little chap with it all.

"He acquired a great liking for Fennell, and he brought with him a great fondness for homeless dogs probably because he was a waif himself. Every day he would get a new dog, take him around to the mess-shack and get him a big feed. His hunger satisfied, the dog generally beat it. After this had happened with several different dogs, he finally brought in a little stub-tailed mutt which he decided to keep tied. But Mr. Pup spent most of the night howling and some one cut him loose. Leon missed him the next morning and had one of those French fits. He started to investigate. Some one told him that Fennell had cut the rope. He came in ready to annihilate Fennell but couldn't find him. One could see by his face what was in his mind. It was

hard to go back on a friend, but the loss of his dog was too much. He held up the piece of rope and between sobs he called down on Fennell a stream of curses which would have shamed the most hard-boiled man in the A. E. F.—it was the only English Leon knew—and he finished with tears rolling down his face: "Le bon petit chien, il est parti!"

Company "E" had not been idle during the month of March. The First Army Corps plans indicated that the lines through Vaucouleurs would become more and more important. The light copper line along the railway had not been entirely satisfactory and Company "E" began to build a new line which was to follow the road from Neufchateau to Vaucouleurs and continue thence to Void. As usual this was a job which had to be done in a great hurry. Lieutenants Suddath and Foust started at Vaucouleurs with one platoon and Captain Wattles started with another platoon in Neufchateau. To speed the work a large detail was borrowed from the 101st Engineers.

Another important job was furnished by the narrow-gauge or light railways which, with Sorcey as a center, required telephone service. Here again the Engineers furnished the men and Collins had his hands full teaching them to build telephone lines. These circuits connected with the new lines at Void and went past Sorcey to Corneville, a little town close to Boucq.

There were no unusual construction features on the Void line and the work progressed in an orderly fashion with only minor interruptions such as that caused by the establishing of a new air field north of Vaucouleurs. This made necessary the re-routing of a section already completed. The recall of the engineers cut down the working forces at Vaucouleurs and it was necessary to call for men from "D." These latter who were assigned to help at Vaucouleurs had just become established in the best billets in Laneuveville, expecting to enjoy a rest after their strenuous days at Boucq. Thus came one more opportunity to learn the lesson that in war time the unexpected is usually to be expected.

Just about this time information was received that the Air Service was establishing Headquarters at Toul. This meant telephone service. A section was collected from Gondrecourt and Vaucouleurs, the offices were quickly wired and a small French switchboard installed. As the Air people had no one to operate the switchboard, Craigmile after finishing the installation remained there as switchboard operator until an operator could be found to relieve him.

New officers arrived with the Battalion late in March. These men had completed courses in the training camps, first in the States and then in France, and were put in the Battalion so they might become familiar with the methods used in actual construction work. Lieutenants Waldron and Donaldson were placed with "E" Company and Lieutenants Laveyea and Hyre went to "D." After a stay of a little more than a month all of these except Lieutenant Donald-

son were assigned to other Battalions. During March other changes had taken place in the family of officers; Lieutenant Smith, the Adjutant, was returned to the United States and Captain Gauss became Adjutant as well as Engineer Officer.

The combined effort of almost the entire Battalion resulted in the completion of the lines to Void and Sorcey in short order and the Companies re-

1—Working Out of Neufchateau 2—Co. "E" Motor Mechanics 3—That Satisfied Feeling

turned to their respective towns, "D" to Laneuveville and "E" to Neufchateau. Further German successes in the west however, had caused a new change in the First Corps plans and all construction with Laneuveville as a centre was abandoned. Shortly after its return from Vaucouleurs, Company "D" moved to Harmonville to prepare for new work.

Lieutenant Laveyea relieved Lieutenant Price at Gondrecourt, so he could return to command Company "D" while Lieutenants Griest and Hasskarl took a leave at Aix-les-Bains. Most of the reconstruction work at Gondrecourt had been completed but there remained the necessity of operating the telephone and telegraph lines. Hannam, in charge of the telephone exchange, and rapidly developing into one of the best switchboard operators in the Battalion, thus describes his work at Gondrecourt:

> "To my lot fell the taking charge of an office which was a large relay point in the Motor Dispatch Service where the great bulk of the Second Division telegraph business was handled. This took care of more E. F. M. cablegrams than the Corps office, to say nothing of the

telephone system which had to be operated. The First Corps schools and the aviation fields at Amanty, besides the First Division area telephones, all terminated on the board, so this was no easy task in itself.

"About this time it became evident that the operating of the switchboards which we were going to be called on to do more and more, was becoming quite a problem. It was necessary to make a thorough study of the subject and school the men who were best qualified. We were dealing with the subscriber direct, usually a Colonel or a General who thought that his call was the most important—in his opinion a matter of life and death. He would frequently give us to understand a court martial would be our reward if the call did not go through immediately, even if the lines were shot to pieces. Quite frequently the call was of the utmost importance, although we had to sift this kind out of possibly dozens of others. Most of the business was "toll," so every possible routing had to be in one's mind, while every town and generally the individual officers themselves were coded.

"Besides the alertness, tact and patience of the operator, it was necessary to become a human encyclopedia as well and the great volume of business which had to be put through the French exchanges required almost the effort of a superman. Our own lines were, in some cases, horrible specimens leased from the French and usually grounded. When simplexed these sounded like a young boiler shop. Again, it might be necessary to try to talk over twenty miles of our twist lying across roads and in shell holes, strung under the most trying conditions. Therefore, it was necessary to develop a great pair of lungs and an intuitive sense of what was being said on the other end of the line. The real difficulty was that no sooner did one become familiar with his particular local conditions, the geography of the surrounding country, codes, etc., than everything was changed, including our location.

"At any rate, at this time I was selected to be an operator, either a chief or otherwise, for the duration of the war. It was not because the job appealed to me or I wanted it but because I was needed on this particular work and others could be found to do anything else I could do. It was then I found how one's individuality could be absolutely lost in the Army. In order that the larger unit might function, the individual had to be sacrificed. I mention this not in a spirit of fault-finding but simply to do justice to a large percentage of the fellows."

Certain of Hannam's remarks refer to switchboard operating during later activities of the Corps but, as he indicates, telephone service was popular in the army and there were few men really qualified to do the operating. Those who were selected, however, did efficient work. For the purpose of developing more telephone operators a school was established in the Battalion. In charge of the school was Lynch, a fortunate acquisition during the winter, who had formerly worked under Major Hubbell in the New York Telephone Company Traffic Department at Newark.

The First Corps continued in administrative command of the First, Second, Twenty-sixth and Forty-second Divisions until April when the First Division was hurriedly withdrawn from the line and sent over to Cantigny to help stop the German drive. At this time it was determined to move Corps Headquarters to Toul. Immediately a switchboard was established and the Gondrecourt detachment under Lutz, enlarged by several men from Harmonville, quickly strung circuits throughout the town to various offices and to the French exchange. At the same time a ten-wire line was started from Neufchateau toward Toul, Company "E" working from Neufchateau to Martigny and Company "D" from that town to Colombey les Belles.

Harmonville

The plant at Toul was completed on time and the Corps Chief of Staff moved into his new Headquarters. But once more the plans were changed and the officer returned to Neufchateau. Toul had become an important point for the Army, being in the center of a group of air organizations and a switching point for many of the Corps lines. So the switchboard was continued, the dignified code of "Podunk" being assigned, and a telegraph service established as well. In prospect of still further needs for service at Toul, Cowan drew up a plan and prepared the requisition for a distribution system in the city, involving the use of much aerial cable. Although this requisition was approved and the material shipped, the 406th moved and another organization made the installation. Such, too, was the fate of the cable system around Neufchateau, plans for which were completed by Brittain early in February but executed by the 407th when the material was received.

The line from Neufchateau to Colombey was probably the most satis-

factory one which had been built by the Battalion. Good poles and all other necessary materials were available and there was an adequate supply of good old American tools. In addition an air-compressor and rock drills had arrived. This equipment was permanently mounted on a two-ton truck, both truck and machinery being placed under the supervision of Fullerton who had been particularly successful in keeping this truck on the road. The drills were operated by Peterson and Fennell. The truck was hurried back and forth from one end of the job to the other as the drilling machinery was needed—Fullerton and his flying crew usually spending their evenings on the road.

After this line was finished a critical committee of section chiefs and head linemen inspected it, walking its length, after which a conference was held and sections sent out to fix up certain features which were not quite up to standard. In the rush work of the winter and early spring, speed had made it necessary to sacrifice some of the finer points of the construction and as this was such a very important line, the inspection was planned to make certain that the whole job was done in the most thorough manner.

In April Brittain received a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Signal Corps and was ordered to Tours where he entered into the general engineering work. He was the seventh man to be commissioned without training other than that received in the Battalion. Brittain in his new work for the Signal Corps was particularly successful on submarine cables. This officer was warmly greeted by his old friends when a year later as a First Lieutenant he rejoined his former Company at Brest. The Army Candidates' School had been established at Langres and early in the spring instructions were received that two men from the Battalion be nominated to attend the first class for Signal Officers. Conwell and Kraus were entered in the April class and received their commissions after completing the course.

Harmonville, Company "D's" headquarters for April and May, was a little town about a kilometer east of the main highway and situated on an eminence. The principal industry seemed to be the raising of stock and many fine horses in the village had escaped the watchful eyes of those purchasing animals for the armies. The barracks were comparatively comfortable, being floored with broken stone, and the people most cordial toward these first American troops to be billeted there. However, there was little to keep the men busy during the long evenings. A visit to the Y. M. C. A. warehouse at Toul brought forth a supply of baseballs, bats, quoits, volley balls and boxing gloves. Henceforth the field around the barracks resembled a children's playground. No matter how hard the work was during the day, there was plenty of activity in the evening.

One rainy Sunday afternoon, Magill and Thorpe arrived at Harmonville to announce the promotion of Lieutenant Griest to the rank of Captain. The notice accompanying the telegram was written by Lieutenant Meigs and

announced that a friendly game had been interrupted to take care of this official business, and it would be necessary for the one causing the interruption to come immediately to Battalion headquarters, bringing something to make this interruption worth while. When Lieutenant Griest arrived at Neufchateau the "friendly" game ceased, much to the apparent joy of Captain Wattles and Lieutenant Macfarlan who seemed to be financing the fun, and after the oath of office was administered by Lieutenant Macfarlan, the new Captain produced the "something" suggested by Lieutenant Meigs. And the friendly game was over for the night.

CHAPTER XV

Adventures in No Man's Land

IN THE spring of 1918, about twenty-five members of the Battalion had some experiences which are worth setting down here as a separate chapter in this story.

The Radio Intelligence Service established listening posts out in No Man's Land for the purpose of picking up enemy messages. The posts were located in dugouts, where experienced operators sat at their instruments. From each dugout wires were strung over the ground to the right, to the left and to the front, as close as possible to the enemy lines. At the distant end of each of these wires was placed a copper "mat" a couple of feet square which was buried in the ground. These mats "picked up" the electrical impulses of telephone, telegraph and radio messages. From the mats the impulses traveled over the wires to the operators in the dugouts where they were recorded and then transmitted to Headquarters.

The Radio Intelligence Service was under the supervision of a Lieutenant Smith, an interesting and fearless adventurer who, on account of his services in Alaska, had been nicknamed "Caribou" Smith. The service was not under the First Army Corps but reported directly to General Headquarters. However, as there was a shortage of Signal troops at General Headquarters, the First Army Corps was called on for men to take care of the installation and repair work in connection with the listening posts. During March a detail

from Company "D" and in April a detail from Company "E" was assigned to this work, alternating in similar manner during May and June.

The work of the operators kept them within the dugouts but the Signal men were responsible not only for placing the mats and connecting them back to the instruments in the dugouts but also for keeping the wires intact in the midst of the constant gun fire. To crawl out from a dugout, a coil of wire on one arm, a shovel and tools on the other, with bullets flying overhead and the ground torn to pieces and covered with barbed wire entanglements was not a job for a nervous man. In planting the mats and in subsequent maintenance, some dependence could be placed on the methodical nature of the Boche mind. If a certain section in which a mat was to be placed or wire repaired happened at the time to be under shell or machine gun fire, observations on the interval of fire would determine when it would be safe to do the work. For example, if a volley splashed forth from the machine guns every fifteen minutes and lasted for one minute, it was *comparatively* safe to hop out from shelter as soon as the firing ceased, and to work for ten minutes before again seeking shelter to await the next volley.

A large German power plant near the foot of Montsec at first interfered with the service because of the electric current generated there. Later however, when Western Electric amplifiers were received, there was such an improvement that radio messages from Berlin or the Eiffel Tower were frequently picked up.

In the early days the listening posts sometimes overheard conversations between American soldiers and made it possible to curb thoughtless talk which enemy listening posts might overhear. Every effort was made to keep information from the enemy. In these forward areas all names of towns were coded and no titles used over the telephone. If one wanted to speak to the Division Signal Officer at Menil la Tour, Colonel Schwartz, he would ask for "Schwartz at Maxey." Beaumont was "Boston" and there were other names like "Maine" and "Mississippi" to remind one of home.

The first detail to be engaged in listening post duty was in charge of Corporal Tritle and included Alber, Devlin, Fennell, Lord, Noone,

Entrance to Listening Post

Peterson and Worrell. They worked in shifts, four being on duty while the other four rested. From time to time, those on rest wandered over to Boucq to see their company friends but they were not anxious to talk of their experiences, preferring to keep their minds off the subject. All these fellows acquired a new and more serious expression. It conveyed the impression that they, in their prowlings through the dangers of No Man's Land and their nights in the dugouts while barrages flew in both directions over them, had been very near the Great Beyond.

Tritle and Devlin were stationed in a dugout at Xivray near the foot of Montsec, and Lord and Peterson some distance beyond Seicheprey. From these points they carried picks and shovels and materials, and planted the tell-tale mats, running the wires back to the posts. Tritle later remarked, "We had plenty of everything but food; plenty of rats and cooties and lots of shelling and gas."

The listening post men, not being part of any divisional organization, were seldom warned of impending raids or attacks. Upon frequent occasions the troops were withdrawn from the front line and the men in the dugouts remained, sometimes surrounded by the enemy. Such care had been taken in instructing the Battalion men in the use of gas masks and in the seriousness of gas attacks that throughout the four months during which these listening post details were supplied, there was not a single gas casualty suffered by the men of the 406th, although gas attacks were of frequent occurrence.

Peterson had some interesting experiences which many months later he agreed to describe:

> "They took us in trucks to Beaumont, about a mile back of the line. This was the limit of daylight traffic on the road which was at this point known as "Dead Man's Curve." It was constantly visible from Montsec, the German stronghold, except where carefully camouflaged by strips of burlap stretched between the trees and painted to imitate grass. The first night the Lieutenant said he had no place to put us, and we had better look around for a place to camp for the night. In an old house facing the road just one room had been spared by shell fire and we climbed into a couple of empty bunks. Soon the shells started to explode at close range. The Boche shelled this road each night, dropping them over just often enough to make the hauling of supplies a mighty dangerous job. In the morning Alber and I decided that we had better look for a dugout, especially when we were told that the house we had picked out was the worst place along the road. We found a little leaky dugout just big enough for two, which nobody seemed to have discovered and there we dropped our blankets for the second night.
>
> "Next day Lieutenant Smith came to Beaumont and said that we were to take some supplies with us to our future home to relieve two of our men who had been there for four days. The sign boards

were in French and it was almost impossible to know which forks and turns to take. The ditches all looked alike. Although the trenches from Beaumont to Seicheprey were not so large they were pretty well duck-boarded and drained. At Seicheprey we loaded up with coils of wire, storage batteries, candles and globes and started on the next hop to the front. It would have been bad enough with nothing to carry as in many places the sides were caved in, making a pile of mud in the bottom of the trench. The duck-boards were broken and in some places entirely missing and the water had accumulated from the winter rains and snows to a depth of eight or

Ruins of Seicheprey

ten inches for a hundred yards at a stretch. If you happened to put your foot in the wrong place or in a hole in the duck-board, you would go down to your knees in mud. We had to squeeze through narrow places with our loads and I'll tell you, it was some little trip.

"The new home which we reached was a beauty. The floor was about a foot below the bottom of the trench and the ceiling some five feet from the floor, the room being about six feet square. There were two stationary bunks, a chair, and a board nailed to the wall for a table. On this board the amplifier and globes for picking up messages were placed. When you stepped on some of the boards in the floor you started a miniature geyser. This home was on the communication trench about fifty yards from the front line.

"We looked over the place and rested a few minutes and then started back to Seicheprey for another load of stuff. We had quite a job finding our way back and Fennell lost his way. He climbed

out of the trench to look the ground over, thus getting worse mixed up than ever. It took him about two hours to find his way in.

"When I relieved Devlin at this post I was just too late to get any chow and when it did come I was out of luck. They brought the stuff out from Seicheprey where it was cooked, in fireless cooker cans, and these kept it pretty warm if the carriers did not get tired and stop somewhere. The carriers on this particular night were new to the business and decided it was easier to walk on top than to slip and slide around over the duck-boards. Fritz spotted them, and just as they had taken the lid off the can he put a '77' on top of the parapet where we were standing and dumped a load of mud and debris into the can and over us.

"The next day we received our instructions. All we had to do was to plant a piece of copper screening about two feet square just as close to the German lines as we could get it, hook one end of a coil of twisted pair to the terminals on the mat and walk back to the dugout with the other end of the coil. Then after that all we had to do was to 'shoot' trouble on that line and on the lines to the five other mats in the neighborhood.

"The first night Fritz must have been trying to make somebody think that he was going to pull off a raid. For he dropped over about three thousand shells, naturally right behind the front lines, and every whizz sounded as if it was coming right for the roof of our dugout, but we got nothing worse than the pieces thumping against our blanket of a door. In the morning we started out to see what had happened. Trouble! If it were not for the work of hauling the wire out from Seicheprey and running it through the barbed wire it would certainly have been a whole lot easier to run all new loops to the mats. Every circuit was cut at least twenty times.

"I saw right there where I had some job. But luckily that didn't happen every night. The rest of the day all I had to do was to take that walk back to Beaumont and get some new storage batteries. I had always had the idea that a quiet sector was a place where days at a time would go by without anything happening. Maybe that is what they do call 'nothing,' but it did not seem like 'nothing' to me. For every night there would be a half hour's continuous firing, pretty heavy firing, and then it would dwindle down to one about every five minutes. Then in the middle of the night the gas alarm would go off and we'd have to lie there half awake with gas masks on for fifteen or twenty minutes 'til the 'all clear' came. This happened sometimes once, sometimes three or four times in a night. The third night we saw a bunch of doughboys coming out of the front line and we asked them what was up. 'Oh, nothing.' Well, we told the machine gunners who had a dugout just across the trench from us, to tell us if anything happened. One said, 'Oh, you'll know all right—when you hear our gun you know it's time to go, for we are a rear guard to cover retreats.' Well, we would have been waiting yet if we waited for that gun for all the troops were called out of the front lines that night in expectation of an enemy raid and the

machine gunners pulled out with them and never said a word to us and we woke up the next morning, a quarter of a mile out in No Man's Land, with all our troops behind us. About nine o'clock they came in again and the machine gunners informed us that they had forgotten all about it. I guess we would have forgotten all about it too if that raid had been pulled off.

"After my four-day trick was over I made a special trip by foot and otherwise to Boucq and placed my request for $10,000 life insurance which two months previous I had thrown flat.

"The next time my turn came to go up to the dugout I found that the station had been moved back to Seicheprey. This Radio Intelligence section was a separate and distinct branch of the Signal Corps and all of its workings were supposed to be secret. I think that is the reason we were always stuck in some out of the way corner. We found our dugout way over in the corner of a graveyard at least two hundred yards from our nearest living neighbor.

"It was a much more comfortable 'home,' however. Although it was built on the ground level it was at least five feet thick on the side exposed to enemy fire, and made of solid stone work. The roof also must have been four feet thick, the whole being built from the ruins of the houses of the village. But after seeing reinforced concrete pill boxes eight and ten feet thick, split in the middle by a well-directed 380 mm. and holes dug twenty feet under the ground caved in by the concussion of a bomb, we realized that even this safe looking place was only safe in looks. Just contrary to our former home, this place was too big. Our little charcoal fire had to stretch some to keep it warm during those long night watches. To give an idea of the size, it contained two decks of eight bunks each with plenty of space at the end for our instrument table.

"Our lines to No Man's Land had been withdrawn and our two mats lay in a ditch about a hundred yards away. We could still pick up the German buzzer messages and also keep our own lines policed. It seemed pretty soft after the other job, but after all there are not many places that did not get hit by shells sooner or later at that distance from the front.

"Gas was giving us more trouble than anything else at this time. There were four of us on the job at this station, three operators and myself to keep the wires working. As soon as I landed they told me that the Boche had formed the habit of throwing a sprinkling of gas shells over every afternoon at about five o'clock. It was a very propitious time of the day for on two occasions he had managed to drop a couple into the kitchens around town, the first time killing a cook and both times causing the loss of a meal and ruining all the rations in the kitchen.

"This day we heard the first one coming and its 'pop' as it exploded. We marked it as some distance to the leeward and took our time getting our masks ready. Others soon began coming thick and fast so we got in our masks and awaited developments. We saw everybody getting down to the end of the town away from where

shells were falling and in a position where the wind would carry the gas away from them. I said that was the place for us and started off but the others did not follow me. After about an hour's wait the gas cleared away and I started back, and as I passed the Red Cross station there lay my three buddies all stretched out in a row and in pretty bad shape. They had started down later and a shell had burst right beside them just as they took off their masks. They were sent back to the hospital as soon as an ambulance could be brought up and were marked unfit for further front line duty.

"That night I spent alone in my cemetery. I did not know a thing about how to run the instrument, and it was a rather delicate affair, so there was nothing for me to do but call up the Lieutenant and ask him to send up three more operators. Two days later they arrived. That little evening's work pretty nearly cleaned out our end of the Radio Intelligence section.

"The next day was bright and sunny and I had nothing to do but wait for the relief. I took my old magazine and sat on a rock in the sun and read. Then the only survivor pretty nearly got it! I had been watching a couple of our planes trying to cross the lines and incidentally to dodge the Boche anti-aircraft fire. I got tired looking up and went on reading, never noticing that the planes were getting directly overhead. Suddenly a whizz—smack! I almost felt the wind of a piece of shrapnel that dropped out of the clouds right down beside me—so I took my book over in the shade of the dugout.

"That night about 8 o'clock we got another rather heavy dose of gas. The town was thoroughly saturated and when I heard a whistle blow I went out to see what was happening. The gas officer had decided to evacuate the town which was in a hollow, until it cleared up. So he ordered all the men to get blankets and follow him to the hilltop at the edge of the town. And on that breezy hilltop on a raw March night we settled down to sleep."

The Company "E" men comprising the detail for April were under Corporal Drew and included Custer, Gallo, Grindel, Henry, Leasure, McKay and McDonald. As was the case in March, these men, not being under the direction of the Division, were not warned when trouble was expected and here too upon several occasions the division troops were withdrawn from the front lines, leaving the signal detail marooned. Fortunately on most of these occasions, the Boche raids did not reach the American front lines. At one time, however, when Gallo, Grindel and McKay were in a dugout, the Germans did come across and bombed nearly every dugout in the American front lines, the one occupied by the Radio Intelligence men being one of three that escaped. The men remained at their station entirely surrounded by the enemy until a counter-attack was started and the Boches driven back.

The electrical energy required by the amplifying apparatus was furnished from storage batteries. These were charged by the Field Signal Battalion

at "Maxey" and delivered to "Boston" by motorcycle. From that point they were carried out through the trenches to the dugouts. This was hazardous work. Custer it seems, had a conscientious conception of the importance of his station and tells of an occasion when he volunteered to obtain new batteries:

> "The man in charge told me that the batteries were run down and unless he got some more he would have to shut down, so I volunteered to go through a barrage to get some. I had to go by trench and it took me three hours to make a round trip. When I got out to where the batteries were, Corporal Drew was there and he asked me if I came out through the shelling and I said 'Why?' He said 'Well, all I have to say is you are a d—— fool.' I told him that unless I got back with the batteries the station would have to shut down. I had to wait a few minutes as there were some Hun planes overhead, but as soon as they were gone I started and when I was about half way I was knocked down by three shells that landed near me. I picked myself up again and when almost to my dugout two shots missed me by a few feet. There was a marsh to the left of me and they tore an awful rip in the water and I thought what a nice rip they would have given me. I got back just in time, as the station had just stopped operating from the batteries 'dying.'"

On another occasion, realizing the dangers of repair work by daylight, the Radio Intelligence Corporal organized a patrol which was to go out over No Man's Land after dark. This did not suit Leasure. If there was a line to be repaired it should be done at once. The Corporal told him it was a reckless and foolhardy undertaking but that if he wanted to he could go ahead. It was bright and clear as he crawled out over the barren strip which separated the contending forces. He followed the wire, supposed to be one of the shorter ones, examining it for a break. As he crept along and nothing happened, No Man's Land seemed little different from any other shell-torn ground. Soon he struck a wire entanglement and picked his way through. He did not give a thought to the fact that this barrier would now be a distinct hindrance should it be necessary to make a hurried retreat. As he progressed he began to wonder at the veracity of the man who had reported

Standing: King, Leasure, McKay, Gallo
Below: Drew, Custer, Grindel

File 221.35 Radio

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER.

26 April, 1918.

From: Chief Signal Officer, American Expeditionary Forces.

To: Officer in Charge, Radio Division, O.C.S.O., A.E.F.

Subject: Operators of L.S.F.2.

1. Report forwarded by Captain Loghry covering the excellent work of Sergeant Eugene Peterson and Corporal Paul D. Herrold, of the Radio Intelligence Service, Signal Corps, and Privates McKay, Grindell and Gallow, of Company E, 406th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps, temporarily attached to the Radio Intelligence Service as lineman and substitutes for Listening Station No. 2, during 20 and 21 April, at the time of the offensive on the 26th Divisional front, has been received.

2. The coolness, steadfastness and resourcefulness shown by these men under the trying conditions reported by Lieut. Thompson is a source of satisfaction, and it is requested that you indicate to them personally, and through publication of this letter in your Weekly Bulletin, my appreciation of their actions at this time.

E. RUSSELL,
Brigadier-General, N. A.,
C.S.O.

221.35 Radio 1st Ind.

Hq. S.O.S., A.E.F., O.C.S.O., 26 April, 1918 - To Captain Robert Loghry, Radio Int. Officer, S.C., G.H.Q., American E.F.:

1. Inviting attention to the commendation above from the Chief Signal Officer.

2. The work of the men mentioned has been noted on the records of this office.

By Direction:

L. R. KEMM,
Major, Signal Corps, U.S.A.

O.R.I.O., R.D., S.C., G.H.Q., A.E.F., May 7, 1918.

Copy furnished Commanding Officer, 406th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps.

Robert Loghry.
Robert Loghry,
Capt.,SC.,USR.

Commendation for Gallo, Grindel and McKay

that this was a short line. Again he met an entanglement, this time of barbed wire, and after he had wormed his way through he straightened himself slightly to stretch his muscles. A rifle cracked. Zing! A bullet sped past his head. No orders were necessary. He dropped like a log and slid into a shell hole. He began for the first time to think that perhaps the corporal was right. After things seemed quiet he crawled out of the shell hole but this time wiggling along flat on the ground and twenty feet further he found that the wire had worked loose from the terminal on the copper mat. The damage was quickly repaired. He managed to get back to the dugout just as the corporal had collected a patrol to go out to search for him.

Gallo, one of the men trapped by the Boche raid on Seicheprey, has given this modest story of his experiences:

> "We had four mats, something like a wire screen, about twenty-four by thirty inches. These were buried in the ground about a foot deep—one north, one south, one east, and one west—from one to two hundred feet away from our station, the connection made with twisted pair. We had a four-point control switch in the office so that we could switch the mats singly or in pairs.
>
> "The amplifiers were quite sensitive. We could pick up all the conversations over our own American telephones, field buzzers, etc., as well as the French and German telephones and telegraph. Our duties were to listen in and put down in writing everything that was heard, so we were playing spy both on our men and the Germans. The Germans made very little use of their telephones at this point, but their field buzzers and wireless were used considerably. During my first watch of four hours I copied sixteen pages of conversations, buzzers, wireless, etc.
>
> "Our first week was uneventful. They shelled us continually during the day. There was a barrage every night about nine, usually lasting until eleven or twelve. Our Infantry fell back frequently, but we were never notified as no one in charge seemed to know where we were or what we were doing.
>
> "After six days we were relieved and sent to Toul. In another six days we returned on our second shift. On April 21st the Germans pulled off an attack. The barrages started at three o'clock in the morning and kept on advancing. About five-thirty or six o'clock the barrage passed over us. The Germans were soon all around us, past us and everywhere, but some way or other they missed our place. Our station was kept working until six in the morning but then the noise was so terrific, our lines were so shot up, and the Germans were so close, that we could do nothing. Our orders were to keep the station going as long as possible. The day before we had received a Western Electric amplifier and telephones and had specific orders, in case of an attack or of being cornered, to dismantle the station and destroy instruments before the Germans got hold of them. So we had everything in readiness to destroy all instruments. The station

records I hid under some stones near our place. At seven o'clock our station was reconnected as the Germans were pushed back and imminent danger of their getting our equipment had passed.

"The first night following the battle we gathered up all the reinforcements we could get which were four artillery men, four infantry men and two or three runners, in all thirteen or fourteen men. We had our pistols, one automatic rifle and seven or eight ordinary rifles and a few grenades. Starting at five in the afternoon, every man of our force had to stand one hour watch during the night. Another barrage started about 3:30, but lasted only a few hours. This night we were prepared for almost anything but nothing turned up.

"The day after the raid our Lieutenant had searched everywhere, all the field hospitals and bases as well, but could not locate us. They gave us up as either killed or captured but at last they found us and we were ordered out and dismantled the station entirely."

On account of the conduct of the men at the listening post during this Seicheprey raid, the Chief Signal Officer wrote a letter commenting upon their "coolness, steadfastness and resourcefulness under trying conditions."

Service in the listening posts continued during May and June, each company completing two tours of duty. The responsibility was taken over by the Army Signal troops when the 406th hurried to the Marne with the First Army Corps late in June.

Chapter XVI

"Where Do We Go from Here?"

VERSATILITY might be called an outstanding characteristic of the men of the Battalion. A shining example of this trait, and almost the same story might have been told by any other member of the Battalion, is the following from Fest: "Starting at Chaumont I was official bugler, barber, K. P., post-hole digger, pole-setter, mule-driver, tree-trimmer, mailman, general interpreter, custodian of bicycles, Ford windshield manufacturer and fire marshal; at Rimacourt, M. P.; at Marnay, country storekeeper and medical man; at Vaucouleurs, motorcycle driver."

Koser gives an example of the same trait. "Sergeant Binder said one day,

" 'Can you ride a motorcycle?'

" 'Sure!' said I. I never had, but I scented excitement. I reported to the Major and swore I could ride anything on two wheels. I was ordered to Chaumont on a small 8-cylinder English motorcycle. I studied the instruction book a bit, said a prayer, wished myself luck, climbed aboard, shut my eyes and let 'er go. As I left the court, a Captain was entering. Lucky thing for him that he was quick on his feet. He did not have a chance to say a word for I was a mile down the road before he knew what had happened."

Tact was another outstanding quality. "Slim" Spangler was the star "tactitian." At a public bathhouse at Neufchateau he wandered about looking for a vacant dressing room. He came to one which was apparently

unoccupied. He tried the door. A woman screamed. "Pardon Monsieur, pardon Monsieur", said "Slim" as he backed away.

The continued German successes during the Spring of 1918 made the First Army Corps restless. Some of the divisions were in the trenches but not under American tactical command. There was a feeling that an American Army under American command, trained in the American theory, viz., successful warfare can be waged only by an army instilled with the offensive rather than the defensive idea, would show the Boche a trick or two. Time and again it was rumored that the First Corps would be concentrated. But the German advance to the west made the situation so critical that the divisions could not be collected and the First Corps continued in administrative command only.

The area surrounding Corps Headquarters was covered with French military and civil wires. It seemed superfluous therefore to extend the construction of American telephone lines. Negotiations with the French resulted in the acquisition of a number of leased circuits. One long line was built up by connecting together French wires from Neufchateau by way of Bar le Duc and Souilly to the Headquarters of the Second Division at Sommedieu near Verdun; another connected the Forty-second Division at Baccarat by way of Nancy to Corps Headquarters, American built circuits reaching from that point to the Twenty-sixth Division at Boucq. During the negotiations, although both the Major and Captain Gauss had acquired a fair French vocabulary, Thevelin's services were most necessary and he was ordered to report at Battalion Headquarters. With much protest and after many goodbyes, Thevelin insisting "I belongs to Coompanie 'D'," departed from Harmonville, remarking dejectedly: "Last year on my birthday I am wounded. This year I leaves Coompanie 'D.' I don't want other birthdays to come."

Around Neufchateau there were many interesting *mademoiselles*. One of the chauffeurs of Company "E" became interested in a particularly attractive one. That she was the daughter of the village coffin maker did not deter the gay suitor. One evening he called on her, wearing a new raincoat of which he was very proud. It made quite an impression on the *cherie*. However, other subjects so distracted the mind of the caller that he forgot to take it when he left. A few days later it rained and he was not quite certain as to where he had left the slicker. He called on the coffin maker's daughter but she said very sweetly that she knew nothing about it. He was somewhat surprised when the Battalion marched out of Neufchateau in the rain, to see his sweetheart waving an enthusiastic farewell, clad in the lost coat.

A miscellany of small jobs took up the latter part of April and May. The headquarters of an air group was established at Ourches and a circuit was built to connect it to the line leading north from Vaucouleurs. The air

LIFE IN FRANCE

group had erected a new pole line upon which the telephone wires were strung by Company "D." After the job was completed a complaint reached the Battalion to the effect that the Ourches switchboard could not get satisfactory connections over this line. An investigation disclosed the fact that the air group had decided after the wires were placed, to reroute the pole line. Being short of poles they took out a dozen of those to which the telephone wires were attached, leaving a long span of wire without support. The commander of the air group when he knew the facts, absolved the Battalion from blame for the poor service. As the French were building a new line across the country permission was obtained to attach the wires to this line. Satisfactory service was thus reestablished. Two other air fields were prepared, one north of Vaucouleurs and one north of Toul. These were also wired and connected to the American system.

Kelly, a little Irishman from Texas was assigned to the Battalion as a telegraph operator, and stationed at Toul. One day "Uncle," as Colonel Voris was familiarly known, walked into the office. Kelly was sweeping and as soon as he spied the Colonel, he dropped the broom and stood at attention. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. Voris looked at Kelly and said:

"One day when I come in here the 406th is as military as h——. The next time I come in they don't know a thing about it."

Kelly remained stiff as a broomstick.

"You don't like my jokes do you, Kelly?" asked Voris.

"Y-Y-Yes, Sir," stammered Kelly.

"D—— it! Why don't you stand at ease then?"

There were so many circuits now in the northern area that Captain Gauss, who was charged with the general supervision of maintenance, decided to establish a testing station at Vaucouleurs. There were no American troops in the town at the time, but a small room was obtained not far from the railroad along which the principal lines were located. Bailey put up his test boards and with Green and Callahan, took over the test station and the maintenance of the lines. Harris, who upon the completion of the circuits to Menil la Tour had remained with the Signal men of the First and Twenty-sixth Divisions, also came under the supervision of this station.

The French insisted that all repairs on lines leased from them should be done by French troops. They asked that when cases of trouble developed, reports should be made to them. This practice, however, usually resulted in delays and consequently telephones were almost certain to remain out of service for days until the French would clear the trouble. This was not the kind of maintenance the men of the Battalion were accustomed to, and it was not infrequent when trouble developed, for one of the men to slip out of camp and

1 and 2—A Couple of Lieut. Meigs' Pole Yards
3—"Woe to the Man Who Was Late at Reveille!"

clear the trouble before the reports were made to the French. Harris became an expert at this "gum-shoe" work.

Some of the leased French circuits developed queer symptoms, becoming veritable will-o'-the-wisps. Time after time the lines were out of order. And each time the line "came clear" before the trouble could be located. An inspection trip was made over the line. The French were found to be stringing a new circuit on the same poles with the leased circuits, apparently oblivious to the fact that the new wire was "crossing" the working circuits. After a conference, the French agreed to allow the Americans to take care of the leased circuits until the French linemen finished their job. The French method of stringing wire was primitive. Two men, one on each side of the pole line, carried the coils unwinding them as they walked along. The climber accompanying these men, as each pole was reached, pulled the wire tight by hand and made it fast. The new circuit was being placed on the top brackets of the poles and what was happening to the lower circuits as they became crossed and short circuited by the new wire may readily be seen. Dickson took charge of the maintenance and his men laid emergency wire along the ground where the French were working and connected this for use in place of the circuits on the poles. As soon as the French had completed a section, the emergency wire was moved on and the regular circuits restored to service.

Business to the north increased and the circuit which had been "cut" to connect Ourches, or "Flying Fish" as it was coded, was needed for "through" messages. Further, this air group at Ourches required several additional lines. Lieutenant Price made a survey of a route from the air field across the meadows to the main highway west of Pagny, there to connect with the French leased circuits. But authority to build the line was not obtained until the day before it was required. Consequently it was necessary for the entire Company to pitch in, digging holes, hauling poles, distributing material and stringing wire.

The *Directeur* of the *Bureau des Postes* at Toul sent a lineman to Pagny to point out the French circuits to be used in making the connection. Each French lineman had his own sections in which he worked and the only record of circuits and poles seemed to be contained in the little memorandum book carried in his pocket. The lineman appeared at the junction with his book and designated the wires to be used. Harris however, had already been testing out the various circuits and disagreed with the Frenchman. There was no chance for an argument with the latter for he evidently had a high regard for American telephone men. He readily agreed with Harris and to show that his heart was in the right place, he changed the notes in his book to correspond. The line was completed three hours earlier than had been promised. A small distribution system was placed at the Ourches flying field. And here, as in similar installations near Vaucouleurs and Toul, all circuits to the hangars and around the fields were for obvious reasons placed underground.

Lieutenant Meigs' pole records by this time had become extremely complex. Poles had been obtained from various yards and by the authority of various *Directeurs des Postes*, usually in a hurry, and the memoranda which the Supply Officer received were not always dependable. He therefore organized a system of American pole yards at various convenient locations. The poles usually arrived on Sundays and freight cars had to be unloaded promptly. Woe to the man who was late at reveille! He was sure to receive an assignment to the next Sunday unloading job. Speaking of speed in getting ready for reveille, Jerry Donbaugh and Sam Bigham were the prize winners. It is said that at the call, all

"Officers Are Never Satisfied, Anyway!"

Jerry had to do was put on his boots. With Sam it was said to be different. He had to throw back his blankets and light his pipe before he was prepared for the day.

"African golf," "leaping dominoes," or just plain "craps," was the favorite indoor sport in the A. E. F. immediately following pay day. One night in the barracks at Neufchateau there were several games in progress. For some reason—beer fini, perhaps—the Cafe Vallon was not patronized. "Big Dick" and "Little Joe" have a musical sound to the American ear, but "Grande Richard" and "Petit Gho" present difficulties. However, the "bones" will

Another View of Harmonville

roll just as well for francs, even though they do look like cigarette coupons, as for "two-bit" pieces. As the money gravitated to a few pockets, the games decreased in number until there was just one game going—and this was composed of the winners of the other games. But before the money could accumulate in any one pocket somebody discovered a cootie and "rolling the bones" degenerated into "reading shirts." It was said that this was the first, last, and only time that cooties broke up a crap game in the 406th.

The scattered construction details and maintenance responsibilities during the period of watchful waiting at Neufchateau did not keep the men sufficiently busy to suit those in command. Officers are never satisfied, anyway! So a drill and training program was arranged which included athletic games. At Neufchateau Company "E" had the use of various fields, but at Harmon-

ville the entire countryside was under cultivation, and the setting-up exercises and drills were held in the town. The first day provided an excuse for a town holiday to see the Captain shout his commands from a manure wagon. The first week ended with a Battalion review on a field near Neufchateau. New instructions had been issued for the operation of truck trains and convoys, and the trip from Harmonville was used for practice. At the review, as the two Companies were lined up at attention, Major Hubbell called Gallo, Grindel

The Pistol Match

The Ball Game

AFTER THE REVIEW AT NEUFCHATEAU

and McKay of Company "E" to the front and read the letter of commendation received for their action during the German raid at Seicheprey while they were on listening post duty.

After the review the Battalion marched into Neufchateau where Vance had prepared mess. This was followed by a pistol match between picked teams from the two Companies, "E" winning by a narrow margin. Then came a ball game and when it was called off on account of rain "D" was so far in the lead that all count of the score had been lost. The "D" men had their revenge for the drubbing "E" had given them two or three weeks before. There was plenty of "African golf" to satisfy all. As a matter of fact it was

The Practice Move

said that in the 406th this game reached the highest state of perfection the world has ever known.

There was an unfortunate incident connected with this reunion. As the Companies marched down the road from the parade ground "Smoke," the mascot who had been with Company "E" since the early days at Monmouth Park, was run over and killed by a dispatch rider. There were real tears shed as Company "E" buried him near a pine woods just north of Neufchateau.

A number of dilapidated trucks were turned over to the Battalion at this time. They had supposedly outlived their usefulness, but after being overhauled by the motor men of the 406th were put to work. It is interesting to note that some of the revamped relics were still in active service with the Battalion when the Armistice was signed.

When the Motor Transport Corps was organized, men from all signal units hastened to the coast before the new organization began to function, to collect trucks shipped to the Signal Corps. Urffer, Gruninger and Orr proceeded to La Pallice and the trucks, although as yet without bodies, were loaded with engineer supplies for the base being established at Gievres. From this point the convoy moved to Nevers to secure bodies. The Boche drive toward Paris was then at its height. The entire train was loaded with Signal

Corps supplies and started toward the front, via Paris. But at Paris it was held for fifteen days and then sent to Lieusant. After unloading it was directed to return to Nevers. "D" Company was without the services of its shop foreman and two of its best chauffeurs all this time. It was not until July, at La Ferte, after twelve hundred miles of traveling that they rejoined the Battalion.

Shortly after the review it was decided to move "D" Company to Neufchateau to facilitate Battalion drills. The move from Harmonville was made strictly in accordance with the new regulations governing truck convoys. The trip was slow and hot and dusty but by noon the barracks on the hill north of Rouceux were occupied.

During the ensuing days everything was put in shape for a move to any point on the entire western front. Under the supervision of Lieutenants Foust and Price tools and material were carefully weighed with a view to ascertaining what, in addition to the men and their baggage, might be carried on the Battalion trucks. It was found that enough equipment could be carried to install a system of three switchboard positions and seventy-five telephones, to build twenty kilometers of eight-wire line, thirty kilometers of two-wire line, and about fifty kilometers of insulated field line. In addition to this material the Battalion carried a complete machine shop with each Company and the gasoline engine with its air compressor and pneumatic rock drill apparatus.

With fuel aboard, this train of thirty trucks, six light delivery trucks, three touring cars, twenty-one motorcycles and the wheezy and complaining ambulance could travel two hundred and fifty kilometers.

Loading schedules were prepared and a program arranged whereby on short notice a practice move could be made. Various sections of the barracks were designated as freight cars and surplus material, tools and winter clothing, which at the time was entirely unnecessary, were "loaded" for shipment. On Monday May twenty-seventh at eight o'clock in the evening the order arrived for the trial trip. By two the next morning everything was in readiness. The convoy was formed at eight after a fast and furious inspection of all of the quarters and grounds.

"Smoke." "Hardtack" in the Background

On the Line from Colombey to Franconville

Captain Gauss had been transferred to the Chief Signal Office of the Corps, and on the morning of the move Lieutenant Price was taken from "D" Company to become Battalion Adjutant. Lieutenants Foust, Hasskarl and Suddath had been sent to the Signal School at Gondrecourt and, with the exception of Donaldson, the lieutenants who were attached to the Battalion for training had left. With a scanty remnant of officers the column started. There were many halts during the morning for adjustments of loads and the noon mess was held just outside of Certellieux. In the afternoon the convoy moved steadily along until it reached Sartes, the end of the journey. The return trip on the following day went along without a hitch, demonstrating the value of the practice. An inspection was ordered for all motor vehicles and personal equipment within five hours after the units returned to camp. But a new job arose and "E" Company escaped the inspection.

Company "E's" assignment was the construction of a line to connect a headquarters of British bombing squadrons at Autigny with American Headquarters at Chaumont. The British General was in a hurry for the service. Captain Wattles with his Company and with Fullerton and his air outfit beat the schedule, completing the circuits before the British Signal men were ready to use them. The British Commander was duly appreciative and expressed his feeling in a letter to the Chief Signal Officer.

By proclamation of General Pershing, Memorial Day was set aside as a holiday on which honor would be paid to the growing list of American dead. The men of the Battalion contributed funds with which a stone slab and cross had been purchased and erected over Hollowell's grave. Arrangements were made with a Y. M. C. A. worker, Rev. Smith, formerly a Methodist minister in Pasadena, California, to conduct services. Both Companies

scoured the neighborhood for flowers and when the procession started from "D" Company's barracks on the top of the hill, each section chief carried a bouquet collected by his men. Company "E" fell into the column as it passed their barracks and at the Y. M. C. A. the minister joined the procession which marched to the Rouceux cemetery. The Battalion was formed around the grave and one by one the section chiefs deposited their flowers. Reverend Smith based his remarks on the faithfulness of Hollowell, made a plea that the men give a good account of themselves and ended with a prayer that they all might profit by the lesson taught by Hollowell's character. After taps by Fest and Hale, the men silently returned to their quarters.

June dragged along and the First Corps still remained at Neufchateau. To be sure, there were miscellaneous jobs to occupy the time. A section from Company "E" was sent under Lieutenant Donaldson and Electrician Dickson to Goviller to build a line for the British Air Service, a large independent unit of which had been located in the Baccarat sector. The line extended from Colombey les Belles to Franconville, the Headquarters of the British General. The Company "E" detachment was the first group of Americans to be seen in the neighborhood of Goviller and the camp, particularly the kitchen, drew the usual crowd of curious civilians. The detachment remained at Goviller for a few days, many of the men being laid up with the "three-day fever," a light form of influenza. The next jump was to Crantenoy from which place the circuits were continued to Bayon. At Crantenoy tents were pitched in a large field adjacent to a chateau, the occupants of which claimed to be descendants of an ancient King Daglebert and they welcomed the Signal men, entertaining them royally. Thence the circuits passed through the old cities of Vezelise and Tantonville. The streets in these towns were extremely crooked and all of the wire fixtures were placed on the tops of steep roofed buildings which slowed up the work. There was in Tantonville one of the largest breweries in France and this did not speed the construction.

The epidemic of "flu" hit the camp at Neufchateau. It went through barracks and tents attacking practically every one. It also caught the detachments which were billeted in Madame Garcin's garage. These latter were cared for most solicitously. They were put to bed and served

Taps by Fest and Hale

Mme. Garcin
and Capt. Griest

Mme. Garcin's Home

with the best of food and were not allowed to move until Madame pronounced them well.

When the line to Bayon had been completed Lieutenant Donaldson moved his detachment to Baccarat to take up the construction of signal lines for the light railways leading toward the front. Tentative plans covering these lines had been prepared at Tours and showed the railways extending across No Man's Land and into the trenches occupied by the Germans! Needless to say, all the material suggested by the original plans was not required. The detachment was billeted in a large glass factory, the ground floor being occupied by over a thousand horses and mules. Before the arrival of any of the material, however, the detachment was ordered to rejoin the Company.

Surveys had been made for rebuilding the line from Neufchateau through Gondrecourt to Abainville. This line had been originally built by details of Infantry under the direction of a Field Signal Battalion, and many of the poles were planted to an insufficient depth. Moreover, the poles were placed in many cases so close to the trees that there was no room for crossarms. It seemed very likely that there would be need for additional circuits leading in

this direction. A new line with three circuits was therefore built, using the old material. This work was handled by Company "D" with Miller in charge of the platoon working south from Gondrecourt and Coates and Woodward working north from Greux. Miller's section continued the line to Abainville, where a large railroad center was nearing completion. When the circuits were finished and material was about to be ordered for the distribution system around the railroad shops, these shops were ordered abandoned because the French feared that they were too close to the front. After the work had been suspended for two or three weeks it was again taken up and the shops completed. This was another illustration of the general indecision and unsettlement and uncertainty and doubt which existed in the Allied forces early in June. The German armies were preparing for their last terrific drive and no one could foresee even from one day to the next what might happen.

The 319th and 322nd Field Signal Battalions had arrived in the area, the 319th being held for the Army and the 322nd assigned to the First Corps. Large details of men from each of these Battalions were loaned to Company "D" to provide additional labor and to familiarize them with the nature of the work being done for the Corps. These men helped tremendously in completing the various jobs in the early part of June.

There was a large Air depot at Colombey and Collins with a detachment equipped it, while Coates with a detail installed a communication system for a new Air field just east of that town.

Still no definite orders came. While the Corps continued to mark time, surveys were made, poles delivered and Miller's detachment including men from the 322nd Battalion worked out of Colombey on the line to Toul. At this time Lindley, Pfefferle, Curley, Ross and Smith, Company "E" telegraphers, were sent to the vicinity of Paris to operate Signal Corps offices and were lost to the Battalion until September.

It was the middle of June before the suspense was relieved. The First Army Corps was ordered to prepare for action. Company "E" was selected to go with the advance party and "D" was ordered to take over all of the work near Neufchateau and close out the affairs of the Battalion. All arrangements were made with the greatest secrecy. While few knew the destination of the organization many suspected that it would be in the vicinity of Chateau Thierry, which seemed likely to become the center of the next German drive. The 322nd Battalion was also to accompany the Corps and all of its men who had been working with the 406th returned to their own headquarters and were replaced by additional details from the 319th.

On June seventeenth Company "E" left Neufchateau. A feeling of determination and satisfaction such as they had not heretofore known kept spirits high. One thing was certain. Waiting was over. Action was near.

CHAPTER XVII

On the Marne

EARLY on the morning of June seventeenth Lieutenant Price with Interpreter Thevelin and Sergeant Gretzler set out. They started in advance so that no time would be lost in surveys and other preliminary work at the new headquarters when the men with the installation material arrived. Following Lieutenant Price was Captain Wattles with Electrician Lowe, Sergeants Collins, Mumford and Russell and a fleet of the fastest trucks loaded with switchboards, telephones, telegraph instruments, a supply of wire and a force of installers and operators. Last came the heavy trucks with the remainder of the Company and the Headquarters men and supplies.

La Ferte sous Jouarre, a town on the Marne, about twenty kilometers west of Chateau Thierry proved to be the destination. When the Americans arrived the region was under control of the Third French Corps.

The advance detail completed a survey of the most pressing work by the time Captain Wattles and his "flying squadron" drove into the town on the afternoon of the eighteenth. The men had spent two days on the road but they set to work immediately, and before letting up for the night ten thousand feet of wire had been placed and two switchboards and thirty telephones were working. Sergeant Mumford with Bailey and Gaghagen handled the switchboard work and Sergeant Russell with his linemen put up the circuits. The bridge across the Marne at this point had been blown up by the British in

1914 to check the advance of the on-coming Boche and it was necessary for Russell and his men to borrow boats in order to string the lines across the river.

The following morning Corps officers began to arrive. Before evening more than sixteen miles of wire, all of which was attached to fixtures on the tops of the steep-roofed houses, had been strung and twenty additional telephones installed. On the evening of the nineteenth the remainder of Company "E" arrived and commenced work on the installation of a large switch-

La Ferte sous Jouarre

board and an electric lighting plant. The following day Sergeant Adams strung a line to General Liggett's chateau. Lynch organized the switchboard operating and with Cavanagh and MacRonald listed the various French circuit routings. Hannam was dispatched meanwhile with a few men from the 322nd Battalion to operate an office at Meaux, the rear echelon of the Second Division.

Most of the billets in France were stables or muddy fields. But here was an exception. These were located in a small suburb to the east, La Petite Ventuil, consisting mainly of summer homes of Parisians. Danley describes them:

The Billets at La Ferte

"These were the finest billets that we had in France—practically new houses, with only seven men in a room, hardwood floors, water inside, and a kitchen stove, a flower garden in the rear, and an iron fence around the place."

Company "D" did not leave Neufchateau until a week after Company "E." The time was spent in settling bills and in shipping tools and supplies which had been left by the truck trains. With the help of Captain Gauss who had remained to represent the Corps Signal Officer, the maintenance and construction activities in the area were transferred to the Fifth Army Corps. Captain Griest was assisted by Lieutenant Guy who at this time was attached to Company "D" and who proved a most capable and enthusiastic addition.

Murdaugh of "D" had taken over the light railway lines at Baccarat from Lieutenant Donaldson before Company "E" left Neufchateau and he remained there to finish the work. "Dad's" detail was made up largely from the 319th Field Battalion with Jensen, Donbaugh and Buehler to help with the supervision, and Althouse and Walkup to handle the motor end. This detachment took over quarters in a glass factory and reveled in the supply of

hot water from the single furnace left unharmed by the Boches during their brief occupation of Baccarat in 1914. There was a story that the owner of the glass works had, by the payment of a sum to the German government, secured the promise that his factory would not be molested. But on one of their nightly bombing excursions the Boches upset the story by dropping a bomb in the middle of the factory. It also upset Murdaugh and his two "chronometers." Dad always wore two watches while in France. One of them was set for Paris time and the other for "West Chester." When he had a task to perform, Paris time was used. When he was curious as to what "Joe-boy" back home might be doing, the West Chester timepiece was consulted. Miller with Haislop and Spangler were left behind to finish the line from Colombey to Toul, Longo remaining with them to obtain the rights of way. The rest of Company "D" joined "E" at La Ferte.

Pessimism was rampant in the Allied Armies. The German Army, although at tremendous sacrifices, was approaching Paris; every one seemed to agree that if he was willing to pay the price the Hun could make a further advance and that if he reached Meaux, about ten kilometers west of La Ferte, he might from this point destroy the French capital by shell fire. At French Headquarters little was discussed except the possibility of further retirement.

Baccarat

In the rear, French soldiers were everywhere engaged in digging trenches and constructing entanglements along different lines of resistance. All over the city of La Ferte were plastered official proclamations warning all civilians to leave the town. Army trucks were provided to carry citizens toward the rear, while those who were fortunate enough to own carts dragged them down the road with motley loads. A common sight was an old man leading an ancient horse hitched to a cart heaped high with clothing and furniture; perched on the top of the load a sad-faced old woman and bringing up the rear, the younger members of the family leading a weary cow.

Men from the Battalion were dispatched hither and thither on motorcycles to survey existing telephone lines. Should any line be adopted as the main axis for further retreat, telephone facilities would be needed quickly. On one of these trips Fest and Moss had an experience worth repeating:

> "Moss and I started from La Ferte and worked toward Rebais. On a narrow road we caught up to a big touring car which appeared, from a rear view, to belong to a General. We trailed him for some time. He was making about fifteen miles an hour and we were afraid to pass him and hand him all the dust for he had a better job than we. So we followed along for another kilometer and finally decided to take a chance. His driver turned sharply sending us into the ditch, our machine falling on its side with the side car straight up and Moss tumbled over me with his long legs. The officer in the car, a Colonel, immediately jumped out and asked if we were hurt. Seeing that we were both all right, he looked over our machine. It was a wreck. At this very turn there was a little woods which sheltered an army repair shop and the Colonel told the commanding officer of the outfit to put his best mechanics on the job. At noon, after a very good dinner at the camp, we were on our way.
>
> "Getting out on the main highway, in the excitement we became confused with the map. The first thing we knew we heard a noise. Down came a house. A few seconds later another shell came over and got the barn, so we thought we had better find out where we were. We asked an M. P. who told us we were three and a half kilometers from Chateau Thierry. I want to assure you that we did not have nor want any more business in that neck of the woods."

Company "E," assisted by a few operators from "D," continued to manage the Headquarters telephone service and to maintain the lines leading toward the divisions. These lines had been hastily thrown together and in many cases were under shell fire. There was consequently an enormous amount of trouble to be cleared and rebuilding to be done. In this work, Davis, Burns and Drew had many twenty-four-hour tricks out on the shell-torn circuits.

To guard against interruptions to the service due to bombing, all circuits were placed underground for some distance from the switchboard. Thus, if a shell landed in the exchange, the ends of the buried circuits could readily be

connected to a new switchboard. An extra line was built to carry a duplicate set of circuits to the front. Where this latter line crossed the Marne, it ran through two sets of submarine cables some distance apart. Every precaution was taken to insure continuous communication.

The plant grew rapidly and before long there was an equipment of a hundred and thirty lines terminating on the La Ferte board and three telegraph instruments were working constantly to Paris and to the adjoining French and American Divisions. Test stations were placed along the lines leading to the 3rd and 26th Divisions so that the sector assigned to the Battalion for maintenance might be kept under constant supervision.

To "D" Company was assigned the work in the rear areas and after several days of surveying to determine the possibilities of existing lines, orders were issued for wiring the new air fields at Saints and Ormeaux. Cowan, now a Master Signal Electrician, supervised the job. The Air men were anxious to have a direct telephone wire to the French Air Headquarters at Paris but the Corps Signal Officer explained to the new "subscribers" that they were a part of the First Corps and any business they might have with the big city could be handled through the switchboard at Corps Headquarters.

Co. "D" was Billeted Near an Inviting Stream.

About the time this job was finished, Colonel Mitchel decided that it would not be wise for the aviators to live near the field. They were therefore moved into a chateau which had originally been selected for the headquarters of the outfit. Another chateau was found for headquarters. It was at Haute Feuille, some five kilometers from the nearest line, and this too was connected.

On the fourth of July at noon in the Chateau de Lathny, the First Corps of the American Army officially took over from our Allies the command of the sector, being given control of a seven-kilometer front at the point where the enemy had thrust nearest to Paris. There were some French troops in the sector. This was the first time since the American Revolution that American officers commanded foreign troops. The First Corps in turn was a part of General Degoutte's VIth French Army.

Things were getting "warm" and every one worked at top speed fixing up

General Degoutte

the lines, many of which were in bad shape on account of the necessarily rapid installation and hasty repair work. Now that the Corps was in control of the sector, the Battalion took over from the French all exchanges in the area. In many cases the French detail departed immediately upon the arrival of the Americans. As a consequence the making of office records was a long and tedious task for all of the labels and tags were in French as were the circuit maps which had been left behind.

On July fifth Sergeant Dickson with Mohr, Bohn, Callahan, O. H. McKinney and Green of "E" Company as his linemen, and Eicholtz and other "D" Company men as operators, advanced to Montreuil Aux Lions and prepared to take over the French exchange at that point. The central office had been set up by the French in the remains of the postoffice. Montreuil was under fire and it was thought best to set up an exchange in the cellar of a house near the edge of the town, the roof being reinforced and protected by logs, stone and sand. Two thirty-line French switchboards were installed in the cellar and to the surprise of the French, the "cut" from the old switchboard in the postoffice was completed without a hitch. One of the new boards upon which terminated most of the French circuits was operated by French soldiers and the other by Dickson's men. Dickson's knowledge of French was invaluable. On July fourteenth, the spasmodic shelling increased to such intensity that the small force found it impossible to maintain service and Sergeant Russell's section was dispatched from La Ferte sous Jouarre to assist. There was plenty of excitement. At night German planes dropped flares in their efforts to locate American batteries. One of these set fire to a pile of fagots. Bombs were dropping everywhere. Dickson's gang piled out and extinguished the blaze which was making their home entirely too conspicuous. Just then the main lines going down over the hill to the Second Division ceased functioning. Callahan, Green, Jennings, McKinney, Beck and Mohr rushed down the hill through mud and darkness. Over devasted fields and roads they stumbled until they found the breaks and repaired them.

During the close cooperation between the men of the two nationalities, as at Montreuil, the Battalion operators managed to pick up considerable French, a valuable asset in switchboard operation. Dickson had an opportunity to appreciate the life of a French "noncom":

"While at Montreuil, I was constantly associated with French soldiers and had ample opportunity to compare their living with that of our men. For some time I messed with the French noncommissioned officers here. The mess was most formal even when shells were going over. No one thought of sitting down at the table until the ranking noncom, the adjutant in this case, had seated himself. Then they would all arrange themselves according to grade, the adjutant being at the head of the table, the ranking sergeant next and so on down to the end of the table where sat the lowest corporal. Privates were not allowed at the same table. The meals were exceptionally good and were always served in courses. First would come the soup, then vegetables, followed by meat, then the inevitable *salade* and if fortunate, sometimes cheese and nuts before the black coffee. With all this of course was a liberal supply of *Pinard* of which the *poilu* is furnished almost one quart each day in addition to a good 'shot' of cognac. Each meal usually consumed the better part of two hours and was considered over only when the adjutant arose after he had finished sipping his coffee.

"Compare this with the fare of a Yankee noncom who lands at the kitchen at mess time, grabs a hunk of bread, has his beans tossed at his mess kit and usually dips out his own cup of coffee, then bolts it all as quickly as possible, sitting under a tree or on a cobblestone. He dips his mess kit in a bucket of soapy water and calls it a meal. Such a procedure would probably take all the glory out of life for a French noncom."

The headquarters of the 167th French Division had been established at Dhuisy and additional circuits were required to connect this office with the American Headquarters, Dhuisy already being connected to the VIth French Army at Trilport. The 406th had all the work it could handle, so the Dhuisy circuits were built by details from the 322nd but under the direction of Lutz of the 406th. This was a light line carrying one eight-pin crossarm and in the woods south of Dhuisy it dropped to a "rambas"—a line of stout stakes about waist high carrying circuits of insulated wire attached to wooden knobs.

Entrance to Dickson's "Home" at Montreuil.

Sergeant Danley with Grindel, Gallo and Richards took over the office at Champigny at the same time that Dickson went to Montreuil. Sergeant Adams at this time went to Chelles to construct lines for the Fifth Marines. Koser and Shute assisted the French in operating the

civil board at Saacy and among other duties were charged with the responsibility for the very important circuits to the Engineers who were detailed to blow up the Marne bridges in case of a further advance by the Germans.

Lieutenants Hasskarl and Foust returned from their courses in the First Corps school early in July. But Lieutenant Suddath was transferred from the school to a Field Battalion, later distinguishing himself with the 78th Division. The returning officers brought with them two expert telegraphers, Earlix and Davis. There was no need for additional telegraphers at the moment. Earlix was a sergeant, but Davis being a private was pounced upon by a heartless "Top" and given an opportunity to learn the meaning of "K. P."

As the month of June advanced, movements of troops and equipment past the billets near La Ferte increased steadily. French troops were moved constantly in both directions day and night. When the movement of large numbers of American troops commenced, the trucks of the 406th were pressed into service and many of the Marines of the Second Division were transferred from the Belleau Woods region to the vicinity of Soissons by the Signal Corps. By this time the Battalion possessed a varied assortment of trucks and motorcycles and the shop forces were more than busy keeping them on the road. To add to the difficulties, the mechanics had to produce results with a very meagre supply of spare parts and their ingenuity was remarkable. The Battalion was fortunate in having such men as Urffer, McAnallen, Engstrom, Gaus, Grant and Sebring to handle and maintain the sixty to seventy assorted vehicles which the Supply Officer had obtained. To add to the variety of equipment, the motor squads fell heir to seven three-ton trucks of British manufacture. These veterans had already given to the British forces three years of hard service. And the following months proved that they were still able with a little coaxing to rattle over the roads, although the shop crowds were tempted on many occasions to throw up their hands in despair.

The Battalion work itself kept the motor details busy but as yet the Corps did not boast a Motor Supply train. Troops require ammunition and there was only one way to get it to the front. Thus the 406th motor sections were assigned another task. They worked with the Battalion and repaired trucks by day and hauled for the Corps by night, often with no rest for thirty or forty hours at a stretch. Boche planes were continually on the lookout for ammunition trucks. A "pot shot" sometimes resulted in a series of terrific explosions and nothing but a mass of wreckage or a hole in the ground would be left. Perhaps it was only by luck that the Battalion trucks did not share in any of these experiences. But the training and experience of the drivers may have had something to do with it.

Airplane activity was constantly on the increase. During the early days

"Nothing But a Mass of Wreckage . . . Would be Left."

at La Ferte little thought was given to the hostile craft as they passed overhead. But one night a well directed bomb transformed the railway station into a pile of junk and thereafter, whenever airplanes were heard in the vicinity all hands were ordered into the cellars. Night after night, the weary gangs were hauled out and hurried to places of safety while the "archies" sent up their barrages in an effort to force the enemy back to his own lines.

Captain Gauss although attached to Corps Headquarters, preferred to live near his former associates. He was afflicted with a stubborn case of rheumatism and was unable to walk. One evening the Boche dropped a few bombs nearby. The earth shook.

"Rheumatism or no rheumatism, I'm going to get out of this place!" thought the Captain. He leaped from his bed and fled for a cave. The rheumatism was entirely cured!

Lieutenant Foust took charge of Company "E," Captain Wattles being detached and given command of the 52nd Telegraph Battalion, a Regular Army outfit. A farewell party was held and Lieutenant Donaldson who had the least confining duties was made chief provisioner. Captain "Bill" realized before the dinner broke up that his old friends were going to miss him. Shortly after he joined his new organization he was made a Major

and his Battalion was assigned to the Third Army Corps, participating in the latter part of the advance to the Vesle and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. After the Armistice, the Third Corps was made a part of the Army of Occupation and with his Battalion, he shared in the occupation of the Rhine Valley.

Soon after the Air fields at Saints and Ormeaux were equipped, the French took them over and the Americans were moved to Francheville where a new telephone layout was required. However, the Air fields were back in the territory operated by Army troops and the Corps was required only to connect Francheville to the switchboard recently installed in the post office at Coulommiers. The demands for service for American units had grown to such an extent that the French insisted that an American board be placed in this office. Stevens was dispatched to Coulommiers to set up the switchboard and start Davis and Reynolds in its operation. This little switchboard soon began to handle a considerable amount of business, caring for two large hospitals which had been temporarily located in the Foret de Crecy, and a Signal dump which Lieutenant Meigs had established in the town. The latter was supplied by train loads of material conducted by Lieutenant Guy from a new base at Lieusant.

One more hospital remained to be connected before all was in readiness for action. This one was at Jouilly, far from Corps Headquarters. The French were to furnish a circuit from Paris to Dammartin and Company "D" was ordered to build from Dammartin to the hospital. Miller's section was sent to build the connecting line while a hunt was made for the bureau

Bridge over the Marne at La Ferte

or person who could decide what circuit was to be used at Dammartin to connect Paris. While others were searching, Miller with the aid of Longo's French buttonholed a Sunday afternoon stroller who had a telegraph sign on his cap. As luck would have it, this was the very lineman who carried the diagrams for that section and who also had the instructions for the leased circuit.

On this little job many new climbers were developed in Miller's section. Paris has an alluring sound and not every one could get to the metropolis. But from the top of a pole between Dammartin and Jouilly, the Eiffel Tower and many other prominent structures in the great city could be seen. Each man on the job, whether he had ever climbed a pole before or not, managed to reach the top of that one.

The days of preparation and organization were nearing a close. Troops and yet more troops were rushing along the crowded highways toward the front. The streams of ambulances carrying wounded back toward the hospitals gave warning that big things were happening.

CHAPTER XVIII

The First American Offensive

AT MONTREUIL Dickson had a liberal supply of axes and gasoline. He was too near the German lines to attempt any salvage, and his orders were, in case of retreat, to burn everything combustible and to destroy all else with axes. Similar instructions were given to the men at Champigny and the other exchanges.

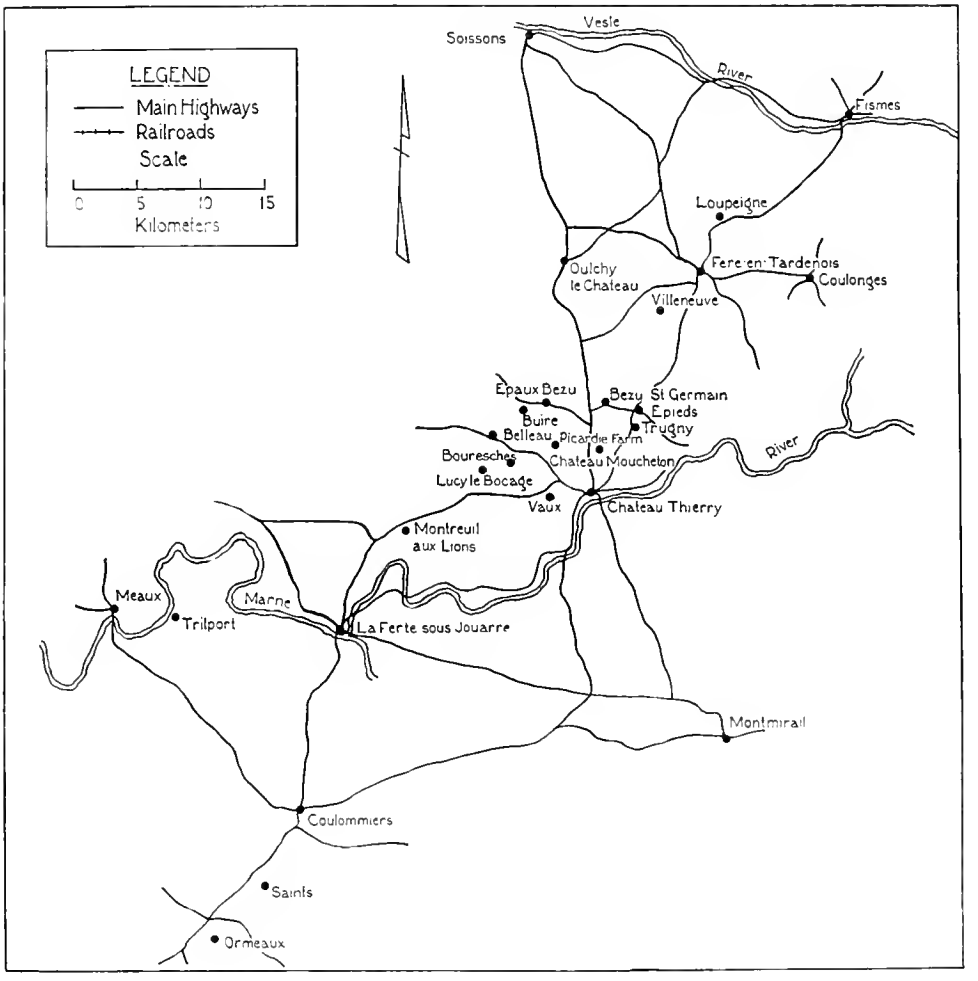
They were dark days, those days in mid-July. With every plan made for retreat every one waited, and hoped, and longed for orders for an attack. The Germans hammered away at La Ferte and were answered by the long range naval guns.

As the hours passed, spirits rose. The American and French troops were holding the enemy! The streets were jammed with more and still more troops being rushed to the front. The Battalion trucks were pressed into service.

On the morning of the seventeenth long streams of German prisoners, weary and dusty came down the road. A little later came a joyful shout, "There go the pontoons." The Marne was to be crossed! It was to be an advance! The procession of boat laden trucks on their way toward Chateau Thierry put to an end all thought of retreat.

That afternoon Major Hubbell received word that the Corps would attack

on the following morning. But he knew that his organization was in shape to shoulder its responsibilities and he kept the information to himself. During the evening the Major stuck to Corps Headquarters to be in close touch with the situation. All hands in the Battalion retired early. Only one thing was certain. There would be no air raids that night. The rain was pouring down



From the Marne to the Vesle

in torrents and it was dark as pitch. But at ten o'clock word was received of the exact time of the attack. It was passed to the men. The morrow was to be the day of days. Sleep was out of the question.

At once, Lieutenant Price with Magill, Giles and Hallgren set out through the blinding rain on motorcycles, with instructions to locate and keep in touch with Major Alfonte, the Signal Officer of the 26th Division. The Major was

reported to be either in the small town of Mery or at Genevrois Farm. But shell fire had wiped both of these places off the map, and the party set out along a road jammed with artillery and infantry units to find the Major. A couple of hours later they located him in an old building back of Lucy. The Lieutenant was ordered ahead into Lucy to find some place which seemed sufficiently protected to warrant the installation of a switchboard. It was two o'clock in the morning when the party arrived in the town. The Ambulance Corps was collecting wounded Americans. The dead of both armies were lying everywhere. A location was found for an exchange. Before day dawned a switchboard was installed. The 26th Division Headquarters remained at Lucy throughout the eighteenth, but on the nineteenth, due to the success of the attack, it was moved ahead to Picardie Farm where a new "P. C." (Post of Command) was established.

As soon as Lieutenant Price had been dispatched to maintain liaison with the 26th Division, Company "D" was ordered to prepare for an early start on any new construction which might be required. "E" Company was divided, part under Lieutenant Hasskarl to handle the operating and maintenance of the exchanges at Corps Headquarters and the remainder under Lieutenant Foust to proceed to Montreuil, there to pick up materials and additional men to build lines for the Corps "P. C." wherever it might locate.

Company "D" was assembled at four in the morning, the trucks loaded with wire so arranged that it could be run off from the reels as the trucks advanced along the road. All was ready for action on a moment's notice. But orders were slow in coming. During the morning, Coates ran a line from the main road toward an Engineer's dump at Saacy. At noon the Company was ordered to Montreuil to await further instructions. Dickson with his detachment, was still in the dugout, not knowing whether the exchange was to be destroyed to prevent capture by the Germans or whether it was to become even more active as the result of American successes and advances.

Very early that morning, Lieutenant Foust with two sections under Sergeants Adams and Gretzler had proceeded to Montreuil. Adams strung the lines necessary to connect the exchanges of the 26th Division in this locality to Dickson's exchange. The town was under fire. The exploding shells especially in the central part and along the main road into the town, gave Adams and his detail plenty to think about. During this time Sergeant Danley at Champigny with his small detachment was having his hands more than full trying to maintain service over aerial lines that were continually being shelled. It was necessary for him to reconstruct lines through a bridgehead at Saacy while the Germans were sending over tons of shells in an attempt to destroy the bridge.

Company "D" continued to Montreuil. News of the progress being made by the first American offensive was most encouraging. Anticipating an

Ruins of Lucy

advance of the Corps, two additional circuits were run to Lucy. Since the roads leading into this town were under observation and shell fire, Miller and Jensen took their sections out about sundown and by nine o'clock finished the job. They terminated the lines in an orchard at the edge of the town for use should the old circuit fail. The old line had been run on the ground. When wagon trains began to park in the woods near the road, grinding the wire into the mud, the new circuits which had been tied to trees were put into service.

The shelling continued on the nineteenth. Little rest was secured that night for there was a continual parade back and forth to the shelter caves. A bomb which landed in a field adjoining the camp set fire to a haystack. The blaze illuminated the region so brightly that Buehler organized a bucket brigade to eliminate the target for Boche shells.

Speaking of that unpleasant night at Montreuil, McFarland "Little Mac"—admits that he developed a powerful lot of respect for enemy airplanes:

> "I was sleeping in a little room in the second story of a house when my bunkie called, 'What's that zit-zut-zit-zut?' The noise seemed to stop but we didn't wait for any more and started right down into the cable bury back of the house. Boom! and a flare lit up the quadrangle! Boom! another one! Down went my head in the mud. Oh, what a night!"

Throughout that night, Dickson with his gang worked frantically to keep up service over the much repaired lines. Early on the morning of the twentieth, Lieutenant Price went to Picardie Farm to keep in close touch with the advancing 26th. The Division had strung a single wire from Lucy to Picardie for use with a buzzer. To make a talking circuit, an additional wire was run by Miller's and Jensen's sections who had been sent forward to work under Major Alfonte.

Stevens back at La Ferte had been detailed to K. P. duty. It pleased him not a bit. He took occasion to say so, and Griest relieved him and sent him up to Price at Montreuil. It was a jump from the frying pan into the fire—but let Stevens tell it:

> "I arrived at Montreuil at 2 P. M. and at 6 o'clock was sent to the Front. In La Ferte it was quiet, but at Montreuil the big ones were coming over quite regularly. My orders were to go to Trugny. "Red" Smith was driving the old Ford, and I was in command of the detail. We got up as far as Chateau Thierry at the forks of the Soissons Road. I did not know which way to go.
>
> "I saw Major Hubbell there and asked him the way to Trugny. He told me to keep on the Soissons Road until I passed the "heavies" and then turn to the right, follow that road down and take the next road to the left. Down in the valley Heinie upset an ambulance and that held us up for an hour. For the next couple of hours we were lost but eventually came out on the right road. Every minute it became warmer. Shells were coming thick and fast. At a chateau gate I saw a man and asked him how much further it was to Trugny. He said it was not far but that Fritz was still pretty close to it. I bummed him for a cigarette and when he turned back his coat I discovered that he was a colonel! I moved and kept on moving.
>
> "Shells were dropping so fast that after another hundred yards we were tempted to swing the bus around and go home. But we kept on and reached our destination. We were told we would not be needed for an hour or two, so we planned on taking a nap. When we returned to our luggage, we found the old Boy himself—the Major-General—planted there. So we did not sleep.
>
> "The next morning we pitched our pup tents. We were called away on a case of trouble. When we returned, pup tents and all our luggage were gone.
>
> "Next time, I think I'd prefer K. P.!"

On account of the uncertainty of the direction which the next phase of the attack might take, two axes of communication were carried forward, one following the advance of the Sixth French Division (being run by the 322nd Battalion) and the other following the advance of the 26th American Division, by the 406th. To connect these axes, a line was run from Lucy to Belleau and a test station established at Lucy in charge of Favinger and Yeckel. In a little house which had escaped the general bombardment of the town, these

men with Daniels and Hale established themselves and spent their time patching lines which were frequently broken down by artillery action.

These were days of early rising and late retiring. Morning mess was generally called between three-thirty and four o'clock, and before five o'clock, sections were out on the road weaving their way through the trains of supplies and artillery. But no one complained of long hours or scant rations, for the push was now headed in the right direction. And whenever there was a

Chateau Thierry—Just After the Germans Retreated

chance for amusement, despite shells and gas, no urging was needed. The construction sections were divided into two groups, one being allowed to rest while the other group continued the advance. One evening at Montreuil the "off duty" group had a masquerade with "Jeff" Adams as master of ceremonies. Assorted costumes were collected from the piles of clothing scattered through the buildings and courtyard, and "Red" Sebring in his top hat and swallow-tail coat took the prize. Fest discovered a brass horn and Hutchison found a flute, and the party had plenty of so-called music.

One night some of the officers were sitting on the parapet of a trench watching the German shells bursting just a short distance away. As might be expected thoughts were of home. One of them made the casual remark:

"Don't you wonder where your folks are tonight?"

Just then a big one burst nearby and Shirley Price rolled off the parapet into the trench.

"I don't know where the folks are tonight, but Shirley is right down here in the mud!" was Price's answer.

On the morning of the twentieth, Sergeants Gretzler and Adams with their sections started with the trucks to locate the Advance P. C. and establish connection to the rear echelon at La Ferte by way of Montreuil. Proceeding along the La Ferte-Chateau Thierry road they strung four circuits through Lucy and Bouresches to Picardie Farm, and terminated two of them on the 26th Division switchboard at that point. They were then ordered to carry the other two circuits to Epaux-Bezu and remain there awaiting further instructions.

Sergeant Gretzler proceeded with the central office equipment, while Sergeant Adams started to string the circuits. It was found that the shortest route was via Etrepilly, although this road was almost impassable, due to its shell-torn condition. In the town the road was blocked by motor vehicles which were piled up as high as the houses on the narrow, sharply ascending street, and a detour was necessary. This detour wound around the edge of a little ravine, the bottom of which was covered with dead of the German and French Armies. The road climbed sharply over a hill which was under terrific fire. Adams chased down the far side stringing his two circuits from the back of the truck. Near the entrance to the chateau at Epaux-Bezu, there were stationed several batteries of French 75's which were shelling the retreating enemy as fast as the guns could be worked. This activity drew shells from the enemy, and the vicinity of the chateau was a most unhealthful place. If the good die young, the men of the 406th must have been a tough gang. A shell landed close to "Dad" McCann's truck, killing a number of Frenchmen and horses, and wounding two Americans from the 322nd Field Signal Battalion. But not a scratch to the 406th, except some perforations in the gasoline tank of McCann's truck.

The chateau selected for Headquarters at Epaux was not more than a mile from the German artillery. It was the custom of General Liggett and his Chief of Staff, General Craig, to keep Corps Headquarters close to the front so that movements of divisions could be readily directed. As the progress of the war developed, however, this practice was not always followed and the Chief of Staff grew more and more to depend upon telephone service to the divisions.

The switchboard had been installed in the chateau basement and just as the circuits leading from the rear were completed, a little before noon, an order came that Corps Headquarters would be moved to Buire, about two kilometers to the west and sheltered from the German positions by a high hill. There was little time to discuss the army and its quick changes of plans. Under Jeff Adams, the sections dashed along the crowded road, feeding twist from the back of the truck. Sergeant Gretzler installed the switchboard, and service was ready at Buire half an hour after the Chief of Staff arrived.

Gruninger had an exciting time reaching Buire. He had set out with only a rough diagram of the roads:

> "The only guides along the way were occasional burial parties. I was completely lost, and finally got my bearings just outside Belleau Woods. I came across a dugout which the Boches had just left. A kettle of thin soup was still warm on the fire where they left it. I pulled up under a tree and tried to 'grab off' an hour of sleep. Nothing doing. Fifty yards away a concealed 12-inch gun was popping every twenty minutes. I had driven in between pops. At the first fire I thought the earth had dropped from under me. No chance for sleep. At daybreak I arrived at my destination and started to set up field boards and lines to the different outposts."

These were strenuous days for the construction men. But they had the advantage of being out in the open where they could see what was going on. The men running the switchboards in the dugouts worked under a severe strain, always at top speed, trying to build up connections over circuits constantly in trouble. Hannam describes the operating situation:

> "These were awful days, for the American Army hadn't exactly acquired confidence and every one was afraid to move before consulting some one else by telephone. There was a perpetual stream of business day and night and oh, those trunk lines of twisted pair lying all over the roads with trucks running over them! Believe me, they were certainly musical. At Buire, after carrying out buckets of bullets, helmets, parts of machine guns, etc., we slept right alongside the boards on a couple of feather mattresses left there by the Germans. At this place the Germans made quite a stand. So we stayed there almost a week during which time our troops moved up the six- and then the nine-inch guns into our back yard. These would have shaken us out of bed if there was any place to be shaken to."

Several new telegraph operators joined the Battalion during the spring to make up for those who had been transferred to other posts. Huckleberry, Davis and Kelly were all Regular Army men with years of experience. Swearingen and Putnam were also new comers who shouldered their share of the responsibility. These men with the original telegraphers headed by Banholzer sent and received messages so efficiently that longing eyes were cast on them by officers of other organizations.

The circuits leading north from Lucy became so extremely unsatisfactory due to wear and tear that on the twenty-fourth a new line was run to Picardie Farm, this time supporting the wires on a homemade lance line across the fields which were still strewn with both allied and enemy dead. The territory between Lucy and Bouresches and the railroad embankment to the northeast had been the scene of terrific fighting when the Marines began their advance. Most of the American soldiers had been buried and each of the

graves marked by a rifle, with the muzzle stuck in the ground. The man's identification tag was attached to the stock and the bayonet was fastened near the trigger by the cartridge belt, making a cross. The weather was extremely hot and the unburied Boches and animals were not pleasant company.

Where the line ran through the woods there still remained many of the poles of an old French civil line which formed good supports for the new wires. Soon after this circuit was completed, the old line across the fields was abandoned.

During these strenuous days there was another call to name men for the Candidates School. This time Lowe and Bruder were sent away. Both of these men gave a good account of themselves. Lowe returned to the States with a field Battalion and remained in the Regular Army. Bruder joined the

At Buire

52nd Telegraph Battalion, in which Captain Wattles had been made a Major, and with this Battalion went through the various campaigns of the Third Corps.

There was another brief respite and Lieutenant Price remained near Picardie Farm waiting for the next jump, Lieutenant Foust keeping his finger on the Corps' pulse at Buire. Each morning the sections made an early start from Montreuil and spent the day waiting for a chance to jump ahead from Picardie. In the meantime two new lieutenants, Pearson and Woodward, joined the organization. These men were sent to Lieutenant Price to obtain experience in forward work.

The 26th was now advancing toward Epieds and the 42nd was ordered to relieve the "Yankees" who had been carrying on a strenuous and successful offensive for nearly ten days. Trugny was selected as the Headquarters of the 42nd and about five o'clock on the evening of the twenty-fifth Lieutenant Price set out with his sections to run a circuit to Epieds. Lieutenant Foust continued the circuit from Epieds to Trugny.

At Trugny the detachment installed a switchboard, and Roach and Gallo stayed by the board while the chateau and surrounding grounds were pounded

with shells and bombs. After the heavy firing, it was learned that the 42nd Division Headquarters would not move into that town, but there was nothing to do but remain until morning, when the station was left in charge of a Signal Detachment of the 42nd Division, and the "E" Company Detachment returned to Buire.

The same night, Urffer, with a truck which had been loaned to the 322nd Battalion, ran into another air bombardment, and from his own account, quickly forgot the disgust which he had expressed for air warnings back at La Ferte. As he says:

> "My truck was jammed up on a congested road with a broken steering arm. While I was trying to make repairs of some sort, Fritz polluted the air again, and as my location was plainly marked by a gang of French artillery men smoking cigarettes, the Hun did not lose much time starting the racket. Naturally, while the Boche was lambasting the pike, I was peacefully dying of fright about a hundred yards off the road where some one had thoughtfully dug a shell hole for me."

Shortly after Corps Headquarters was established at Buire, Captain Griest was ordered to that town to take over the office and to keep in close touch with the Corps officers. The circuits by this time had been placed in fair shape.

The entire Battalion gathered at Buire. Each day the sections were ready to be off by four-thirty in the morning and usually returned for mess between eight and nine in the evening. Still there was no further advance and the days were spent in going over the lines.

On the twenty-eighth, it was decided to move Corps Headquarters to Epieds. New circuits were run from Buire, but over the crowded roads progress was slow. When the circuits had reached Epieds, Colonel Voris announced that as the advance was continuing the Corps would move on to Chateau Moucheton. Orders were left at Epieds that when Coates arrived with advance switchboard material, he should be sent on to Moucheton. Captain Griest reached the Chateau before the regimental signal detail had dismantled their exchange in the basement and was able to take over the various circuits which the infantry men just previously had taken from the Germans. When the switchboard arrived, Miller and Hannam had sufficient trunks ready to give service both to divisions and to the rear echelon at Buire. Circuits for local stations running up through the Chateau were all in place, these having been left in good shape by the Germans in their hurried retreat. Shortly after noon the telephone and telegraph offices were working normally and Colonel Voris had established his desk in the cellar hallway between them.

"Little Mac" went to Buire to bring up Noone and Terneson and various

supplies for the office at Epieds, which Captain Griest took over at this time. He had an exciting time:

> "By the time I had reached Buire, eaten supper, and gotten some rations for the men at the exchange, it had become intensely dark. As we started for Epieds, John was standing on the side of the car. Bill was on the bed rolls on the back. The road was dark and rough. Suddenly I noticed a car coming down the hill toward us on the wrong side of the road. I shot over to my left. B-r-r-r it shot by. As soon as he had passed he came to life to find that some one else was on the road beside himself. He shot on his light but kept on going faster than ever. We didn't stop even to cuss and at length we came to the top of the hill where an M. P. came up to us with a gas mask on. 'Where are your gas masks? Put 'em on,' he mumbled under his mask. All the horns were honking now. We had not heard one before. I know I would never have reached Epieds that night if an ambulance ahead of us had not been going the same way, for all I could see through that mask was the red light on the rear of that ambulance."

The listings on the board at Epieds had not been kept up to date. There were no records available of what circuits terminated there, or how to route calls. That evening conditions became most hectic. The most experienced operators were detailed at other points and the men at Epieds were attempting to give service without any records and with very few instructions. The night was spent in preparing an accurate set of records and listings. This exchange was in the cellar of one of the few remaining houses, but the house was at the intersection of five roads, and the Germans who had recently vacated the town knew just where to drop their shells. Throughout the night, large calibre shells with a scattering of gas shells landed in the vicinity of these cross roads, each successive arrival rattling more glass out of the building. For much of the time, it was necessary to use gas masks. The "Tissot" type had not yet arrived. Operating the switchboard with the British respirator and trying to appease various exacting officers was a real job, especially with the racket outside.

The front line remained almost stationary for several days while the 42nd Division, taking up its headquarters at Artois Farm, relieved the 26th. There was now only one division in the Corps front which was gradually becoming contracted as the sector was wiped out. The 322nd Battalion continued the work of keeping up liaison with the division and this gave Price a chance to return to the rear headquarters at La Ferte for a much needed two days' rest.

During the lull in the activities, the lines to the rear were given attention and a new open wire line was started from Headquarters at Chateau Moucheton through Epieds and down to Chateau Thierry, where there was established

Artillery in the Forest East of Chateau Moucheton

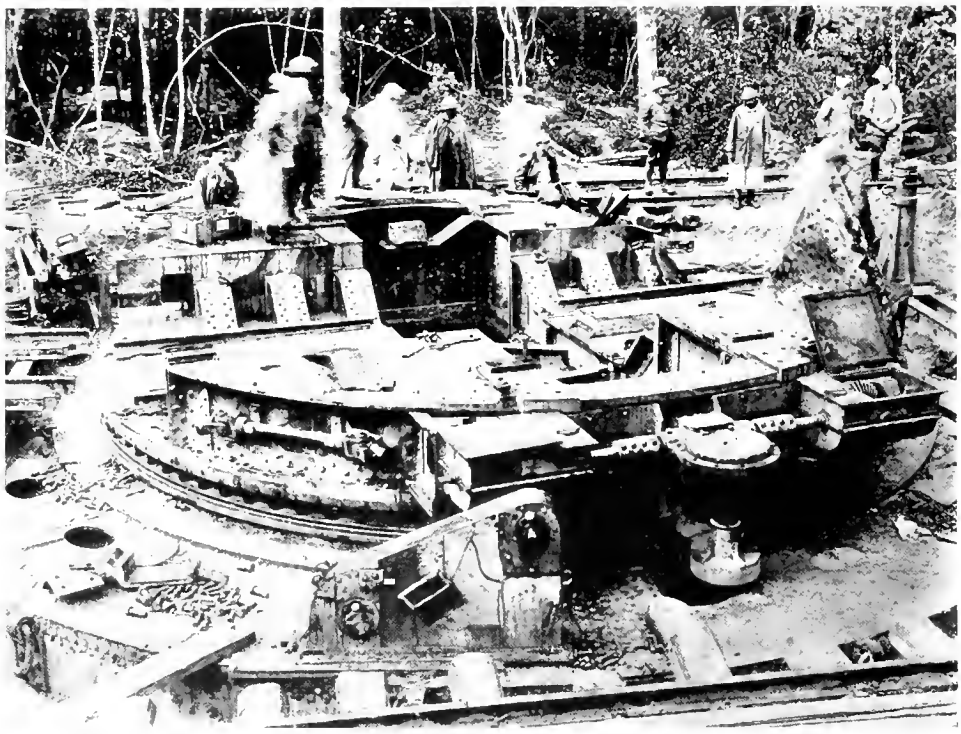
an advanced Headquarters of the Army and a new rear echelon for the Corps. Along the road there still remained a great number of poles from the French civil lines, which gave Collins a chance to make good speed. At Chateau Thierry Gretzler and Russell installed the exchange in the basement of a chateau which had been recently vacated by the Germans. The Boche had not molested the furniture in the building, but other stock of the chateau had been well exhausted as was evidenced by quantities of bottles strewn about the building. From this point it was necessary for Collins to run circuits across the broken down bridge to reach the Army exchange on the south side of the Marne.

With detachments from the Battalion scattered over the fighting region, it was almost impossible for the mess sergeants to keep every one supplied with rations. The Epieds crew was particularly unfortunate in receiving Battalion supplies and set about caring for themselves. In the yard at the rear of the cellar was a large mass of junk out of which were salvaged a stove and various utensils and, as Murdaugh reports:

> "The Germans in their hasty retreat overlooked taking with them a potato patch for which we were duly thankful. Bill Terneson found a shovel and we were not long in digging a sidecar full of them. We ate so many French fried potatoes here that if we passed a potato patch, we would shy off."

In the region northeast of Buire, the Battalion was entering that section of the territory which the Germans had been organizing for their main line of communication. A splendid high tension line had been erected leading from Buire down toward Chateau Thierry and a well-built telephone line remained in place through the forest east of Moucheton, running toward Artois Farm and Beauvardes. During a period of comparative inactivity, these lines were surveyed to determine what use could be made of them when the next advance was started. It was during this period too that many excursions were made to the forest near Moucheton, where the Germans abandoned the foundation of one of the "Big Berthas" with which they had been shelling Paris. Corps Headquarters had moved from Buire but it still remained the base for the Battalion, and each morning working parties set out early for Moucheton, to be ready to jump when the orders came.

Peterson was one of the telephone operators selected for the next move, and with the others spent his days near the trucks at Moucheton waiting for the next advance. It will be remembered that he was one of the listening post men at Seicheprey. The following which he wrote gives a good idea of conditions at this time:



Foundation of One of the "Big Berthas" Which Shelled Paris

"We are still for a few minutes waiting for orders and I am sitting in the truck, dirty and muddy, but feeling fine and in the best of spirits, as I hope will show in this letter. Why shouldn't we feel in good spirits? The Boches are falling back and we are advancing so fast that we are not permitted to leave the truck and must be ready to go ahead with our lines at any minute. This is great stuff too,—thrilling and exciting. As you know I have seen rough stuff before, last March mostly, and in a way it was more so than this, because we were standing there and under fire nearly all the time, but here it is only occasionally that we get mixed up with the exploding shells. Of course, I am speaking of our Company, not our Army. It has been the same for over a week now, working among the ruins of towns and the droves of troops.

"We often get to work in places before the dead have been moved and in the thick woods they are sometimes missed entirely, but it does not make me sad to see the Boche all busted up, lying around on the ground. It is still a mystery to me why human beings must be slaughtered this way, but as far as shivering at the sight of them lying around all cut to pieces, that is past.

"I wrote once about the ugliness of the narrow strip of land behind the front, but it is different here. We have passed through miles of it, ruined and destroyed. It is a pity, but it must be done. Our own guns are responsible for much of it. But the destruction the Boche left behind is pure vandalism, lots of it. Furniture in remnants hacked to pieces not by shells but by axes. I didn't realize in my other experience just what it was to see these sights and the feelings that it gives to look at them. It seems strange that a year ago we were paying out our good money for Boche souvenirs that are scattered all over the ground now. Everything that a soldier carries can be had by simply picking it up. But nobody touches the stuff. We are too busy and we have all that we can do to carry our equipment. We find letters and all sorts of personal property and it is interesting,—German writing on the walls and German signs on the roads. It begins to look as if we were getting somewhere. I just want to let you know that we are going, and getting there, and that America has the goods."

The civil populace had begun to return to the towns which were retaken from the Germans. When these poor people came into Buire where all of their furniture and almost everything else had been destroyed there were many pathetic scenes. Lieutenant Meigs became the big-hearted protector for one French woman who had come back to look for some of her belongings before the arrival of her aged father. She had walked that day an incredible distance and upon her arrival at Buire was almost exhausted. The Lieutenant scouted around and, having given her a good meal, fixed up a place where she might have a comfortable and undisturbed sleep. Throughout the remainder of the war, the Lieutenant frequently received letters of deepest gratitude from her.

Chapter XIX

On to the Vesle

As THE Allied success continued and the enemy retreated, the telephone exchanges at Picardie Farm, Belleau and Buire were abandoned and test stations only maintained at those points. Early on the third of August, orders were given to rush a line to Fresnes as it seemed likely that Corps Headquarters would be established either there or at Sergy. An attempt was made to patch the German circuits leading east from Artois Farm to which point Boche circuits had already been repaired. But the wires had been badly chopped to pieces. The few good stretches had been used by the 42nd Division. So it was decided to run twist. It was the intention later, if time would permit, to piece out the enemy circuits and recover the twist. By two o'clock the circuits were completed to Fresnes and into the house which had been selected as an exchange in case this was to be Headquarters, or as a connecting point should Headquarters be at Sergy. Major Behn with his Battalion, the 322nd, was running a circuit north to the latter town. It had been raining all the morning. Scarcely had the job been completed when it was learned that the morning's work had been wasted. The direction of the attack had shifted and neither Sergy nor Fresnes was to be Corps Headquarters.

Company "D" was now working so far from Buire that permission was obtained to move up the line. On the morning of the fourth, camp was broken and the sections started north. At noon word reached the Company that the Corps was to jump to Fere-en-Tardenois, and circuits were to be run to that town immediately.

Lieutenant Guy made a survey of the Boche lines south of the Foret de Tournelle and Captain Griest covered the section to the north. The best map available showed a road running through the forest and, as there was no time for further surveys, it was assumed that circuits could be strung along this forest road to connect the two portions of the Boche line.

Cowan's P. C. detail was immediately dispatched to Fere-en-Tardenois to install equipment. Woodward's section started from Fere-en-Tardenois to build down to Villeneuve, while Miller started at Villeneuve to continue the line to the southwest. Jensen's section, enlarged by a group from "E" was to pick up the circuits near Artois Farm and run through the woods to connect with Miller. It developed that there was no such road as the map indicated and Miller had headed for a road further to the east. To add to his difficulties, the section truck had become mired just before dark and the heavy reels of field twist had to be carried by hand. In a heavy storm, and in inky darkness, despite "iron rations" at noon, and no evening meal, the men struggled through the woods. Only by touch and frequently calling to each other could they keep together. Everywhere were shell holes, dugouts and fan-shaped groups of fox holes in which machine gun nests had been located. These were filled with water and there were many impromptu baths as the men picked their way along the line in the dark. Just before midnight Miller and Jensen managed to find each other. The sections were joined and the new circuit completed to Fere-en-Tardenois.

Cowan set up the office and while waiting for the circuit to be completed, Coates, Noone and Heisler had time to place all of the equipment in perfect order. A new terminal box, fitted with a hand-made cable to the switchboard which cut down materially the time required for installation and added greatly to the shipshape appearance of the exchange, was used here for the first time. The P. C. crowd was expected to mess with the Headquarters troop but that mess failed to arrive. Cowan describes the situation:

> "Coates saved the day by bringing in a lot of vegetables he found in a nearby garden. These vegetables were planted by the French, cultivated by the Germans, and eaten by Americans. Frequently, we had corned beef in various ways—including burnt. However, we always managed to "rustle" some flour, baking powder and grease and, with our iron plate, which was a very necessary part of our equipment, we frequently had a batch of hot cakes. "Rustling" was often the only way we could get things. It meant sending some one

after almost anything and then not asking questions. If he was a good rustler he always brought it in, be it a part of an automobile or a bed or a cooking utensil or food."

The construction gangs did not fare so well the night the Fere-en-Tardenois circuits were finished. They pulled into Beauvardes about two in the morning and found that no food had arrived. But they did find a floor where there was room to sleep and here they stowed themselves away wet and tired and hungry. It had been a rather busy Sunday. The next morning the 117th Signal Battalion of the 42nd Division, generously shared their limited rations with the men of the 406th. That day the Battalion assembled at Villeneuve. A few days before, this little town had been used as a German hospital.

Open wire lines on poles gave much more satisfactory service than the twist on the ground. As fast as possible, wire was placed on the Boche poles and the twist recovered. But this brought new troubles. Near Moucheton, trees in the forest which had been shattered by shell fire, began to blow over and tear down the lines. It became necessary to place patrols so that every section would be covered at least once in fifteen minutes. After repeated requests, Dailey who had worked faithfully as a cook, was put back on line work. He drew one of the posts on this patrol, and thus describes his activities:

"I was unloaded in the road with my rations and pack, which I had to carry up the side of the hill, through the woods. When the

The Main Street in Fere-en-Tardenois

At Villeneuve

Huns built this line, there was a wonderful lot of undergrowth. They cut it off about eighteen inches high leaving the stubs sticking up. With the tangled iron wire scattered about, walking was almost impossible especially with a hundred and fifty pounds across my neck. Reaching my location, I set up my half of the dog tent and made a connection to the trunk lines that we were to watch so as to report every fifteen minutes.

"This being finished, I went back to my tent and got the proper location on my automatic and a Springfield that I had found. I was not at all comfortable in mind as there were plenty of Germans still in the woods. It was very dark and the odor of decomposed flesh, both human and horse, was very strong. My partner had not arrived when suddenly I heard the leaves and undergrowth cracking. I eased over and took my Springfield and closed the bolt on it real quick when I heard the cry of 'Kamerad, Kamerad,' and when the two husky little fellows started a line of French and explanations, you can just imagine how much easier I felt, for I had been some scared. Anyway, all went well from that on until ten o'clock when Lyons, my partner, arrived and so did Captain Griest with the information that I had to move back to the other side of a little brook. This, of course, meant that I had to tear down all that I had built and move. That is just where the army got in wrong with me again; but we moved nevertheless and the Captain did not leave until some time between one and two A. M. Lyons and I finally got settled along the side of the woods and hill with tons of German ammunition all around us, mostly machine-gun and hand grenades (potato-

mashers). These we hung on trees and had a little amusement of our own, with Denny (Daniels) up on top of the hill wondering what was going on down below."

At Villeneuve the Battalion took account of stock and fixed up trucks and tools preparatory for the next drive. Survey parties were sent out, "E" Company taking the territory east of Fere while "D" worked to the west, and the locations of numerous Boche lines were plotted on maps for future use. On the tenth, while surveys were continuing north of the little River Ourcq, orders came for service to be established to the railhead at Breny. The French were rapidly repairing the railroad from Paris toward Fere-en-Tardenois, and the whole of "D" Company jumped to the job and soon had the circuits completed. Along this railroad there were a great many German dead who had held the top of the embankment, where they had been operating machine gun nests, until charged by the on-coming French and Americans. Every one of the bridges, both on the railroad and on highways crossing above the railroad, had been destroyed and progress was difficult. At this time, Moss with some of "E" Company's men, ran a line from Villeneuve down to Coincy to take care of a new field for the air service.

On the Line to Breny

Warnings were constantly given against handling any ammunition or other material lying around the battlefields, particularly because of Boche traps. But, in spite of these warnings, large quantities of souvenirs found their way into camp and heavy mails were dispatched to the States. While working on the line to Breny, Eicholtz kicked aside the unexploded cap of a shell while planting a lance pole. The cap exploded and he was hurried to the hospital to have numerous bits of steel extracted from his shins.

At last there was a Sunday with nothing to do but rest, wander over the nearby battlefields and write letters home. Here is one of the letters:

"This being the first Sunday afternoon in weeks that we have not been tearing wildly on, I went to the east of the town and sat down under a tree on the slope to read. To the north stretched a valley through which the Boches have recently fled, away in the distance the hills to the north and northeast showing the scars of many shells. To the west was our little town with remarkably few

scars showing from that angle, the church tower, leaning slightly, with the Boche Red Cross flag still hanging out. It was a lovely day and one would not have known there was a war except for an occasional buzz high up in the air as one of the big planes whirled by or a distant muffled thud from the artillery. We have our mess in the garden of a place which the Boche must have used for their officers, and it is in pretty good condition. Our officers use the library of the house for their mess and it is filled with Japanese books and ornaments. The owner of this place was once connected with the Japanese consul's office at Marseilles and he had some stunning stuff in his house.

"The people are coming back into these villages, old and young, and they seem to be gradually recovering some of their effects from various piles of debris. I never saw so many box mattresses. The Boches carried them to the woods and dugouts and left them there. But most of the feather beds have been slashed and the feathers strewn around.

"The other day I went down through the woods to a little chateau where we, in conjunction with the French, are running a switchboard. It was sort of a hunting establishment in the woods and had its conservatories and a big lake with a Japanese garden. The place is said to belong to an American woman who also had a fine house in Chateau Thierry which not long ago was No Man's Land. Here Thevelin and Buehler are operating the switchboard with the French soldiers and are enjoying an elaborate mess."

On the twelfth, orders were received that the First Corps was to be relieved by the Third Corps and would return to La Ferte for a rest. The Battalion moved down and took quarters in the cavalry drill grounds. It was planned at once to have an inspection and then permit as many men as possible to take a short leave at Paris. Several trucks were dispatched with their happy cargoes. The shop gangs were again unfortunate but the trucks had to be overhauled. Most of the shop men had already been to the metropolis on one mission or another but nevertheless they were loath to miss this opportunity after their strenuous services. One of them wrote:

"Our return to La Ferte was supposed to be a resting up period. If it was, it did not include the shop crew among the resting parties.

The Church at Villeneuve—Note the German Red Cross Flag Still Flying

> The Company acquired two four-wheeled trailers which had to be fixed up and that took up four of our days. Next came the order to disconnect our motorcycles and side cars, so that we could pack these fast-wearing vehicles on trucks, thereby avoiding the rough use accorded them every time we moved from one sector to another."

Speaking of leaves, one of the Motor Dispatch Service men was asked, "Did you get to Paris?" He replied:

> "Officially I did not. But when you consider my six months' detached service as a Dispatch Rider, with not always a guiding hand, with a gift of gab and a M. D. S. meaning ('Must Do Something') brassard on my arm, a powerful motorcycle, plenty of gas, and a few spare hours now and then, well—comprenez vous? J'etais la! Nuf sed!"

On the afternoon of the sixteenth, orders arrived stating that the Corps was to move early the following day. That evening the sound of Boche airplanes was heard.

As soon as the bombs began to drop Lieutenant Meigs with Thevelin hastened to the home of a family by the name of Quin with whom they had become acquainted. Mme. Quin was afflicted with heart trouble and Meigs knew her husband would have his hands full taking care of her during the raid. The two soldiers with M. Quin did their best to calm the woman. The concussion from exploding bombs blew the doors open and rattled the glass from the windows. Everybody was running for shelter. Scurrying footsteps were heard on the gravel walk outside as one then another ducked around the corner of the house on the way to the woods. The Boche were aiming at the town and the woods were comparatively safe.

While the group in the house were in the midst of their trouble, and Mme. Quin seemed in imminent danger of dying from the excitement, a French soldier rushed into the room. "Oo! la! la!" "Americaines" and a lot of other words he shouted as he waved his arms and pointed towards an orchard not far from the house. All were too busy to pay any attention to him. A child, the six-year-old daughter of M. Quin, was crying and running around hanging onto first one and then another of the men. Doors banging, windows breaking, the crying child, the insistent Frenchman, the seemingly dying woman, and the intermittent explosions from dropping bombs made a rather full evening.

After a bit Thevelin managed to grasp that the soldier had seen some Boche spies in American uniforms in the orchard signalling to the raiders with candles. The reason for his excitement was then apparent. Meigs, pistol in hand, followed him out of the house and up the road to the orchard. On the way "Al" Coates met the pair and joined them, with the remark:

"Orders were received . . to return to La Ferte for a rest. The Battalion moved down and took quarters in a Cavalry drill grounds"

"It was planned at once to have an inspection"

View of the Camp

"I don't know where you're going or what you're going to do, but I'm with you."

As they entered the orchard they dodged from tree to tree. It was a particularly black night. Suddenly "La! La!" from the Frenchman. Meigs and Coates looked ahead and could make out a pup tent with a lighted candle inside. Two men in American uniforms were inside apparently asleep.

Meigs stuck his automatic under the tent and in his gruffest voice yelled:

"What are you birds doing up here? Come out o' there!"

"Who are you?" was the answer.

"If you don't come out quick I'll shoot you full of holes—the both of you!"

"Wait until we get our shoes on."

"The devil with your shoes," and by way of assistance Meigs grasped one of them by the foot and dragged him out on his back. The other one followed without further argument.

"Line up!" said Meigs. "What are you doing up here?"

"We came up to get away from the shelling."

"This Frenchman says he saw you signalling to the Boches."

"He's a liar."

"Tell it to Sweeney! You guys march down the road and if either one of you lets out a peep, this gun'll go off."

Here Meigs showed one of his characteristic traits. The ground was covered with stubble, and after proceeding a few feet, he ordered his prisoners to halt and asked Coates to get their shoes. Meigs and Coates then marched them down to Battalion Headquarters. Just as they arrived, another excited Frenchman came up and said something to Coates. In a jiffy the two disappeared and in a very few minutes came back with a third man, who was accused of the same crime and captured under similar circumstances.

Major Hubbell appeared at a second story window. Meigs and Coates with the two Frenchman lined up their three prisoners in the pitch dark street below. Meigs had a hard time holding down Coates who was strong for shooting the trio on the spot. Hubbell, when he heard the story, ordered Meigs to conduct the captured men to the commanding officer of the outfit to which they claimed to belong.

With Meigs ordering them to step lively, and Coates "cussing" the "blankety blank spies," the procession marched up the street. The designated officer was aroused and he took charge of the prisoners.

During the bombardment a bomb fell in the midst of a detachment of Engineers encamped nearby. Five were killed and fourteen wounded. Immediately Lieutenant Macfarlan was on the job. With Armstrong and a few others he spent hours that night taking the injured to Coulommiers as there was no American hospital at La Ferte.

Major Wattles and His War-Scarred Car

Chapter XX

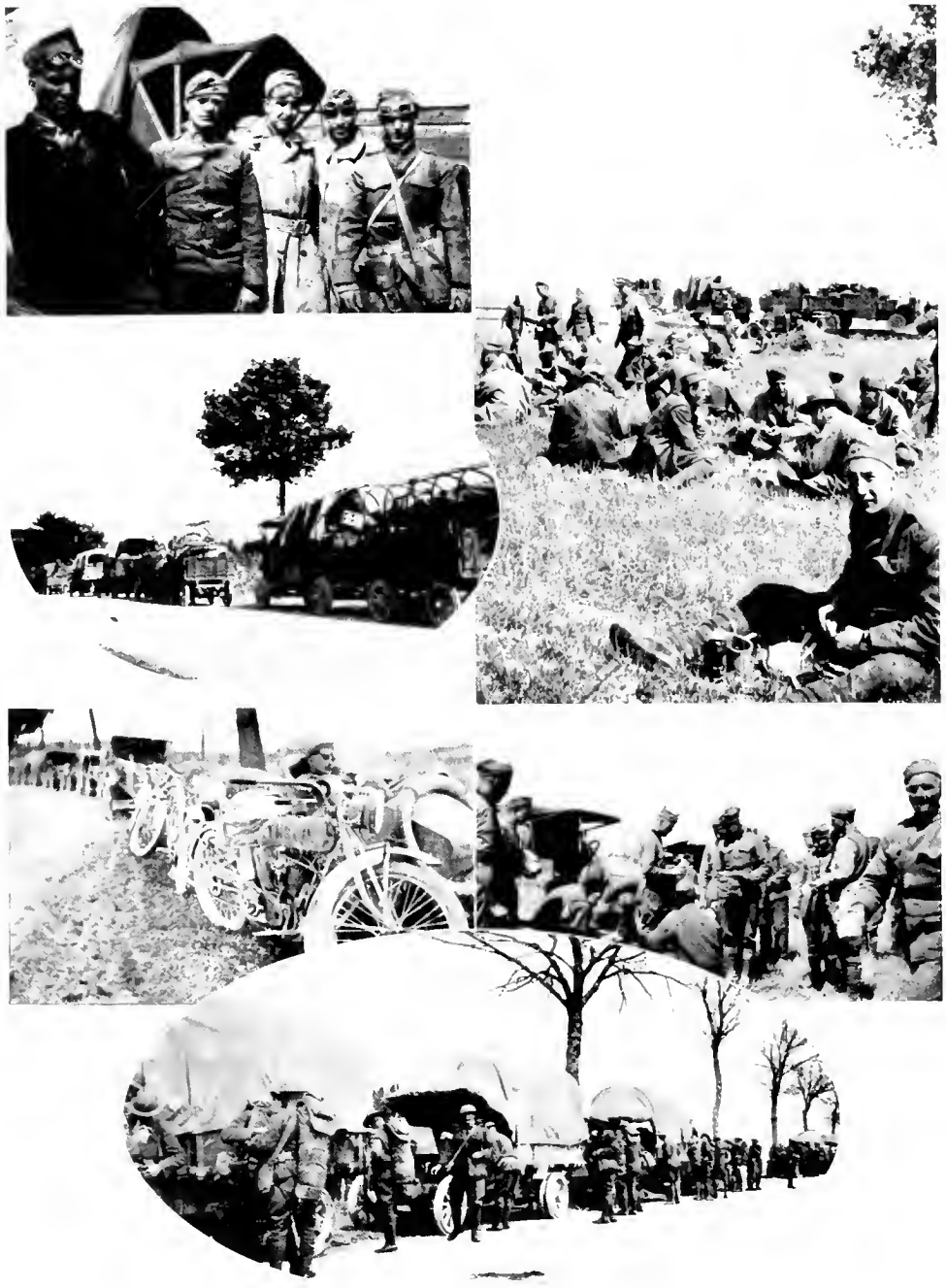
St. Mihiel

EARLY on the morning of August seventeenth, the Battalion set out for new fields. All of the orders were secret and great care was used to camouflage the entire movement. The Corps units left La Ferte at different hours, all going in different directions. The 406th headed first for Montmirail. There was a feeling of satisfaction in traveling along this road which, when the Battalion had moved from Neufchateau to La Ferte, was too close to the German positions to permit of daylight travel.

At Montmirail orders were received to proceed to Sezanne. Without knowing how much or what kind of service might be required, an advance party was organized to rush ahead on a moment's notice to start an installation for Corps Headquarters.

Progress had not been entirely satisfactory during the first morning as some of the heavier trucks persisted in giving trouble. After a halt for mess at noon the train was rearranged, the lighter vehicles under Lieutenant Macfarlan proceeding ahead to Brienne-le-Chateau, the next stop. The heavier trucks followed with the trailers. The weary caravan after mess that evening slept in the open, few taking the trouble even to pitch shelter tents.

Before sunrise the train was again on the road and proceeded to Bar-sur-Aube. The journey led along the valley of the Aube, through villages in which the church bells were calling the worshippers to Sunday services. Every-



ON THE WAY FROM THE MARNE TO ST. MIHIEL

where there was an atmosphere of peace and rest which seemed unreal to this crowd who had so recently been plugging ahead through the destruction and horrors of war.

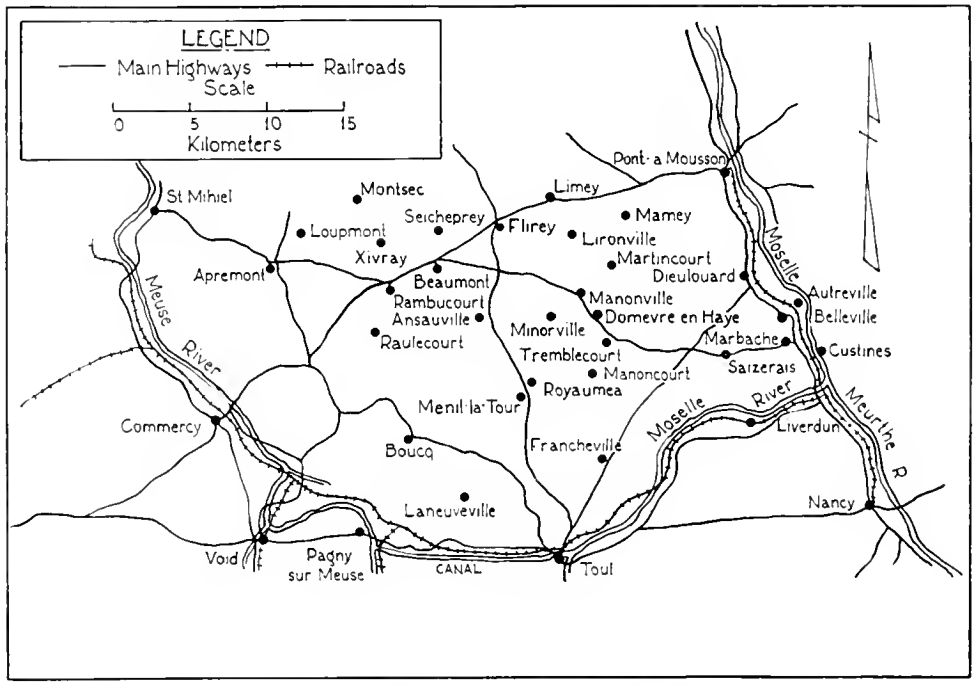
By noon the train passed Chaumont and was headed northeast along the familiar road to Neufchateau. Just outside the town the trucks were held while Major Hubbell endeavored to obtain definite instructions concerning the next stop. The French official at Bar-sur-Aube, not having any orders for the 406th, had inquired from French General Headquarters and had headed the Battalion toward its final destination before any one outside the General Staff had the information, and while the rest of the First Corps was going to a rest area southeast of Chaumont. To correct this mistake the Battalion was directed to Toul. As the trucks moved through Neufchateau, greetings were exchanged between the men and the friends whom they had made during the previous winter. Air units, infantry and artillery crowded the road, all trying to get along to their destinations and there was no opportunity for evening mess. Shortly before midnight, in the light of the full moon and with German airplanes soaring overhead, the trucks pulled into the old French barracks at Toul, were quickly arranged under the trees and the men relieved for food and rest. But some one had made another mistake and the train was compelled to reform and move to another "Caserne."

The Battalion as a part of the First Army Corps was to take part in that great offensive which was to wipe out the St. Mihiel Salient. The Germans had held the territory for four years. For a few short weeks the First Army Corps would have a chance to recuperate after the strenuous days on the Marne and Vesle. And then was to come the period of preparation, so necessary to insure the success of the attack.

The day after the Battalion reached Toul the advance party under Lieutenant Hasskarl was sent on to Saizerais to become familiar with the circuits centering at that place. These were then being maintained and operated by the First American Division.

For three days the Battalion remained in the barracks at Toul. The men of the 322d Battalion challenged the 406th to a baseball game. The 322d team was organized in America before coming to France and had been playing together for some time. When the amateur team of the 406th tackled them, it could hardly be called a game—it was a slaughter.

By the twenty-first various officers and units belonging to Corps Headquarters began to arrive at Saizerais. The 406th moved up and took over the exchange in that town and classified the many French circuits terminating there. Those not engaged in this work moved to Liverdun, billets being scarce in Saizerais, and pitched tents in a meadow between the canal and the river Moselle. The days were warm and the river was a great attraction.



St. Mihiel, Saizerais and Surrounding Territory

It had been planned during the late spring to celebrate the anniversary of the mobilization of the Battalion at Monmouth Park. But the middle of June found "E" Company en route to La Ferte and "D" scattered over the area back of Toul. The anniversary of the arrival in France found the Battalion in better shape for a celebration and a dinner was held in Liverdun. Officers and mess sergeants scoured the country seeking a supply of fruit and green vegetables and "smokes" which had become scarce. The Telephone Employees fund was drawn on again and Colonel Voris and Captain Gauss came down from Saizerais to attend the celebration.

In the earlier days in France, air raids were not so common as they became here in the St. Mihiel region. One night before Bill Brittain left the Battalion, a number of Boche planes came over. There was a rush to "douse" the lights. Only one candle remained burning. There was a reason. It belonged to "Bull" Marr and he was engaged in the most exacting of sciences—"reading his shirt." He needed all the candle power available to locate the elusive enemy.

"Thank Heaven they can't jump," drawled "Bull," referring to the cooties. Airplanes seemed far from his thoughts in spite of the roar overhead.

"I'll make somebody jump," yelled Brittain as he heaved a vacant boot at the candle. His aim was perfect.

A large ammunition factory located in Liverdun seemed to attract Boche flyers. This town was in constant danger too from the bombers who followed the Moselle toward Toul. And if the anti-aircraft guns made the air around Toul uncomfortable the planes came back along the river. So Liverdun was reasonably sure of attention from overhead. A canal passed under a part of the town and on clear nights when the airplanes were particularly active the population was wont to retreat to the tunnel to sleep on the tow path. Many of the Battalion men did likewise, forsaking their pup tents. Those who during quiet periods scorned the tunnel, did not place it beneath their dignity to rush "hotfoot" for the tow path when bombs began to drop. They made such speed that sometimes the lack of a proper respect for sharp turns in the canal sent some of them headlong into the water.

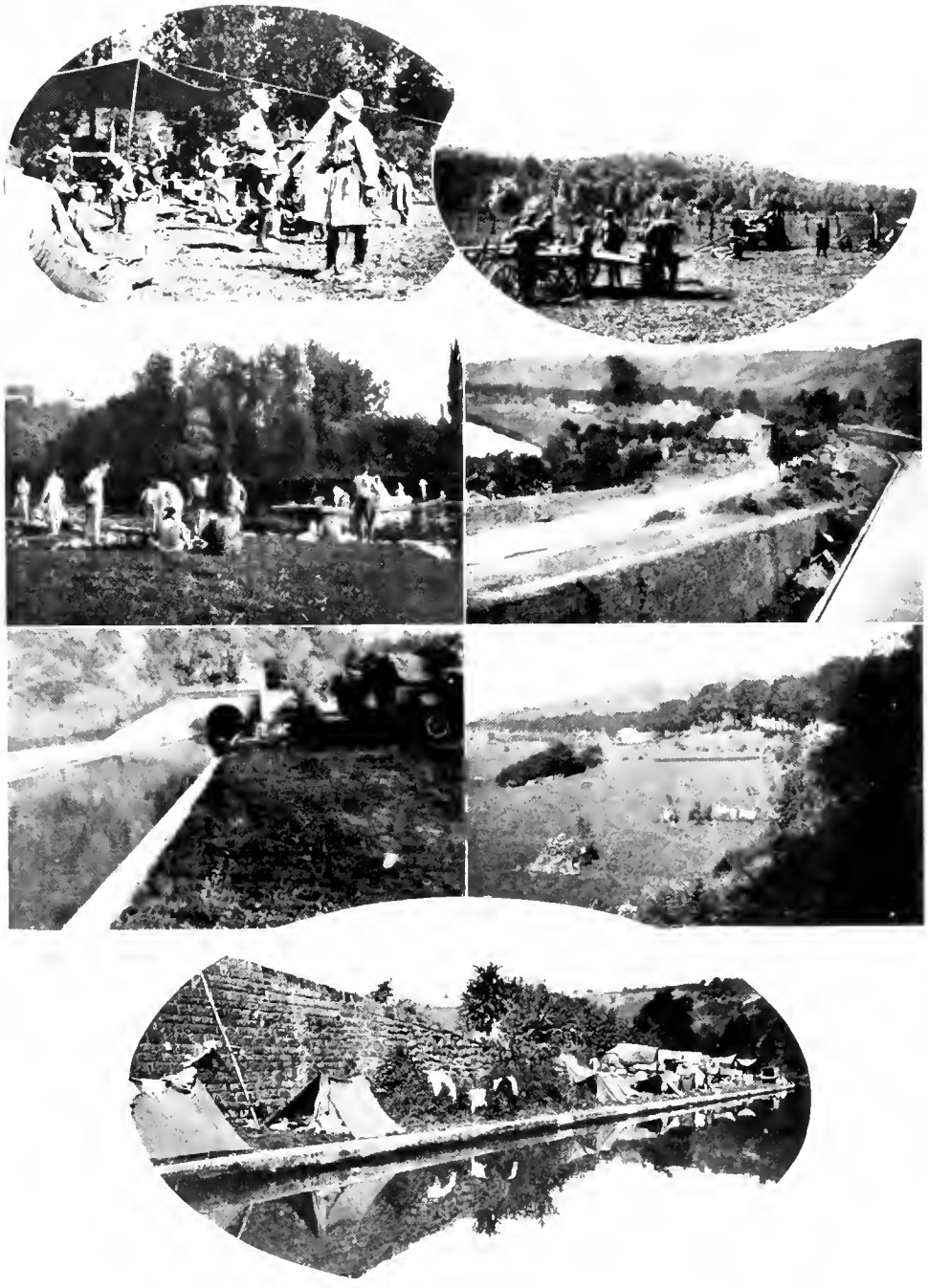
About the last of the month Major Hubbell received orders directing him to return to the United States for the purpose of training troops. Before leaving he addressed the Battalion, expressing his appreciation for the cooperation of the men, and his regret at leaving just when big things were about to happen. A farewell party was given by the officers on the night of August 30th and he left the next day. When about three hundred miles off the coast of France the "Mt. Vernon," on which he was a passenger, was torpedoed. The ship with a great gap torn in her side was able to reach Brest. He sailed again, this time on the "Wilhelmina," and after reaching the States completed a course in the War College at Washington. He was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and assigned as Signal Officer to the 16th Division, then at Camp Kearny, California.

Captain Griest was on leave at the time and Lieutenant Meigs ran the Battalion until the former returned on September second, to take command of the organization. Meigs was taken from his beloved Supply job to command Company "D" with Lieutenants Price and Guy as his assistants Lieutenant Foust remained in command of Company "E," retaining Lieutenant Hasskarl. Lieutenant Pearson became the Supply Officer. Lieutenants Donaldson and Woodward were transferred to other organizations. Sergeant Major Magill continued to care for the duties of the adjutant's office. The following gives the line-up:

Captain Griest—*Commanding*

Headquarters	Supply	Medical
	2nd Lt. Pearson	1st. Lt. Macfarlan
Adjutant	*Supply Officer*	*Medical Officer*

Company "D"	Company "E"
1st Lt. Meigs, *Commanding*	1st Lt. Foust, *Commanding*
2nd Lt. Price	2nd Lt. Hasskarl
2nd Lt. Guy	



AT LIVERDUN

With the exception of the group who were operating and maintaining the office at Saizerais and the motor men who were busy overhauling the machines, the Battalion spent the latter part of August in rest. Permission was granted a few of the men to visit Nancy, about 25 kilometers distant. In order to reach the city, it was necessary to walk to Marbache and at that place board a street car. To play safe the men approached a civilian in the latter town, to inquire as to the proper car. Little information could be secured however for the civilian could not seem to understand what the Americans wanted.

"Let me try it," said Slim Spangler.

"Monsieur," he asked, "Street-ee car-ee run-ee from-ee here-ee to Nancy?"

"Je ne comprends pas," was the reply.

"Darn these Frenchmen," was Slim's comment, "They can't understand their own lingo!"

Early in September preparations for the "show" developed rapidly. The Corps called for help in the transportation of troops. Sixteen trucks were sent to haul the Second Division from Colombey-les-Belles to positions near the line. This work was done at night without lights, and as the rain had again started, the roads were treacherous.

Next in order was the hauling of ammunition. The 406th delivered some thirty thousand rounds of machine gun ammunition, and two thousand each of 75 mm. and 155 mm. shells. But operating and construction jobs were becoming urgent, and every available man was required for the work. The Corps agreed, therefore, to furnish relief drivers if the Battalion furnished trucks with chauffeurs and lookouts. Armstrong tells of a couple of these trips, on one of which he came to grief:

> "One night we were sent out about 5:30 to report to Marbache, a large French ammunition center. After "parleying" we got loaded about 11:30 and started for the front. After driving around until daylight, we found ourselves in the town of Mamey. Starting up a road which led direct to the third line trenches, an M. P. told us the Boche were shelling the roads and killing a lot of artillery men and horses. But Conway and Cavanagh decided with me to go on to get rid of our loads. After a little drive we reached a road on which ahead of us they had just killed four American boys and two horses on a caisson. We were held by traffic for a short time. Fritz, in the meantime, had been shelling, killing and wounding quite a number of boys. We had scarcely gone a thousand yards until we came upon six French three-ton trucks stuck and the road blocked. We decided to go around them and made our way through a field. After going on for about twenty minutes we were stopped again; getting out and looking back we saw Fritz drop over a few large ones and clear the French trucks away. We reached our destination that afternoon at 4:30 and started back for our company, having had nothing to eat all this time.

"Another night we had gone over a large pontoon bridge. There was a very sharp turn and a string of three-ton trucks coming in the opposite direction. We turned too far and our truck went over an eighteen-foot bank. I tried to jump but was thrown and landed on my left knee. Cavanagh being in the rear came to my assistance and we tried to find the other chauffeur, as we thought he was pinned under the car, but he had gotten out safely. I was taken to the hospital the next day."

Frequently these errands were completed only because of the intelligence and initiative of the chauffeurs and noncoms of the 406th. Not once was a vehicle belonging to this Battalion abandoned by the wayside. If a machine came to grief one man was always left to guard it while another found his way back to the Battalion to obtain help. Urffer tells what was done with Armstrong's truck:

"The shop crew was delegated to move the truck back on the road and as this spot was in range of the enemy guns, the Huns naturally took great pains to keep well informed as to what was going on there. So, whenever we heard the noise of a "plane up," we took cover, and in this way, managed to get the truck back on the road without any punishment from Fritz."

During the Marne offensive, when clothing was not readily obtainable, it was sometimes necessary to pick up from abandoned German stores, serviceable garments. Daniels, better known as "Corporal Dinny," or "One-punch Daniels," thus acquired a Boche shirt, built on the lines of a night gown. He managed to retain possession of it during the work at Saizerais. Just before the St. Mihiel drive, the men were working twenty or more hours a day and when they had a chance to sleep, it took more than an ordinary air raid to chase them to the *abris*. Also, so few air warnings proved serious, that it was customary when the *alert* was given, for the men to turn over and sleep the more soundly. Dinny had been a great collector of souvenirs. He always was surrounded by a lot of his trophies. Near the camp one night an ammunition dump caught fire. The exploding shells gave an imitation of an air raid—only many times worse. Most of the men decided that the *abri* was not such a bad place after all. Dinny was the last man to

Armstrong's Truck

go. He had on his Boche shirt which extended nearly to his ankles. He put on his helmet, picked up his gas mask, collected his souvenirs, and without any great haste started for the cave, "cussing" the Boche at every step. When he was about fifty feet from the cave a Boche plane passed over. It fired. A hidden machine gun crew nested a few feet from the spot Dinny was passing. It began to fire at the plane, which returned the compliment. Both were using tracer bullets and firing at about 200 to the minute. Dinny looked up at the

The Town of Montsec as Viewed from Montsec Heights

first shot, discarded his souvenirs at the second, his helmet and mask at the third, pulled up the long shirt at the fourth, and was twenty feet inside the cave at the fifth.

"What's your hurry, Dinny?" asked Banholzer.

"Well I'll tell you, Kid. I had a notion to stay out there and watch the fire works. Then I had another that beat the other all to the devil. As long as I had my running clothes on, I decided to run in here."

The tent camp in the meadow at Liverdun was exposed to air observation and, besides, the nights were becoming extremely cold. So, on the fifth of September, the Battalion moved into a series of stable and hay loft billets within the town.

The positions throughout this sector had been almost stationary for four years and were well organized. There were signal lines in all directions. In Saizerais the French had two switchboards to which the First Division

Signal men had added an American board. The concentration of troops in the area made necessary the installation of three more. Even with all of this equipment the operators had their hands full. As Craigmile says:

> "The living conditions at Saizerais were fairly good, but that office was a madhouse. Our switchboard equipment was very much overloaded, and it was a common thing to have all the cords up and still see the drops falling like snowflakes. Nevertheless we managed to give fairly good service."

In order to check all of the existing maps and to have absolutely reliable information concerning routes when new circuits were ordered, Lieutenant Hasskarl with Murdaugh and Collins made surveys of the territory between Noviant and Pont-a-Mousson. Instructions to these men necessarily were meagre and not entirely satisfactory to the methodical "Dad" Murdaugh, who wrote, "We were sent out to get acquainted with the lay of the land with specifications:

> "'Don't know which route,
> Don't know how many circuits will be needed,
> Don't know when we will want them,
> But get the information d—— quick.'"

As preparations became more active, another call was made for the Battalion vehicles. During the Aisne-Marne offensive the machines at Corps Headquarters had been used so incessantly that many were entirely out of service. Chauffeur McFarland with a car and V. P. King, Geib, Giles, A. E. McCann and Herzer with motorcycles were dispatched to Saizerais where they entered into a long period of continuous driving, day and night, convoying ammunition trains to advance depots, carrying observers to points of vantage from which they might note the effects of gas and of different types of shells, and doing miscellaneous courier duty between the corps and divisions. During this service, King was hit by an ammunition truck, his arm and leg broken and the motorcycle demolished. He remained in the hospital until long after the Armistice was signed. In addition to the loss of King, this service with the Corps cost the Battalion one car and two motorcycles, the other three motorcycles being returned for repairs in October.

As the divisions moved toward their positions in the line, various exchanges were turned over to details from the Battalion. Gretzler and Mumford were assigned to the dugout at Domevre, from which could be seen the enemy artillery in action across the valley. At Tremblecourt, Long with his small crew operated an important office through which passed many circuits to neighboring corps and divisions. The switchboard was of French manufacture and was so worn that it required all of Long's ingenuity to keep it in service. Devlin took over the exchange at Martincourt and was kept busy on

the lowstake lines running toward Pont-a-Mousson and St. Jacques. He was joined on the night of the attack by Sergeant Klingensmith. In a well timbered dugout on the south slope of the hill at Manonville, Buehler and Cannon cared for the telephone needs of the Fifth Marines. Gaghagen ran the exchange in a huge dugout at Minorville, and his small group of operators and maintenance men were almost lost in their rat- and cootie-infested home. It might in its corridors and caverns have comfortably accommodated a thousand men.

The Dugout at Minorville

These forward exchanges were busy places, but even busier were the offices at Saizerais and Liverdun where all of the Corps business was centered. Lieutenant Guy was in charge at Saizerais and with him were Spears, Miller and Heisler doing the maintenance, and Lynch in charge of the telephone operating. Earlix was in charge of the telegraph service, and day after day the six telegraph operators handled a business so great that when the Corps was relieved after the drive had reached its limit, the incoming organization assigned twelve men to handle the work. Dickson established the exchange at Liverdun and turned it over to Gallo who handled the steady flow of messages toward the rear.

The tables of organization for a telegraph Battalion called for twelve telephone operators. The Battalion officers thought they had estimated liberally when sixteen men were trained for this work. But to serve all of the exchanges just mentioned required thirty. Operating was not a job which any of the men would have chosen. It was "fussy" work. And the American Army had grown so rapidly that the importance of using code names was not thoroughly appreciated by some of the newer arrivals in France. Gallo says:

"Many times we had to refuse service; for instance—some one would call the 406th Telegraph Battalion. Our instructions were to say, 'We do not know the 406th Telegraph Battalion, never heard of them.' If the person had called for 'Buster 41,' he would have gotten the '406th' at once. But a good many never realized what the codes amounted to and most of them tried to get around them by saying, 'This is Captain or Major So-and-So.' Well, we had to refuse them too, and if they cussed too hard we switched them on to the 'old man' (Colonel Voris) for a cooling down."

Operating seven exchanges and maintaining the lines between them, together with furnishing large truck details for hauling troops and ammunition, left few from a Battalion of a couple of hundred men for new construction. But the troops of the 1st Army had started an eight-wire line from Toul to Saizerais and called for assistance, fearing that they would be unable to complete it in time for the attack. During four days of excessive rain Lieutenant Price with all of the men who could be spared ran the circuits along the railroad from Toul to Pagny-sur-Meuse while the 401st Telegraph Battalion (recruited from the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company) continued the line to 1st Army Headquarters at Ligny en Barrois. This line was probably one of the most irritating pieces of construction that had been assigned to the Battalion. The time was extremely short and it was a long trip from Liverdun to the job. The line was erected on poles, most of which were "H" fixtures. There was a high and thorny hedge running along the railroad and each coil of wire had to be dragged over this hedge, taken up over the crossarm and handed down on the other side. And the rain beat down constantly. However, the line was completed, and in time for the offensive.

As new divisions were assigned to the Corps the French line leading along the main axis toward Domevre became too heavily loaded to handle the business. A detachment was gathered by Miller and eight additional wires placed on these poles. Fortunately, the underground cable which carried the line under the roads at crossings to prevent its being cut down by the movement of observation balloons, contained enough wires for the new circuits.

The time of the attack drew near. While the Army circuits were being hurried, men from the maintenance details ran circuits from the Corps switchboard at Saizerais to railheads and to ammunition dumps at Marbache, Millery, Custines and Champigneulles. Arrangements were made for taking care of the forward lines. Additional material was sent to various advance centers. Ryno was made a supervising wire chief and traveled constantly through the forward regions, inspecting exchanges to see that everything was fit. From a communication standpoint, all was in readiness for the offensive.

At one o'clock on the morning of September twelfth there was started such a barrage as had never before been known. For four hours it continued. The men in the small exchanges up the line were in a position to appreciate its intensity. Buehler and Cannon at Manonville and Devlin and Klingesmith at Martincourt with their details were in the midst of it, being ahead of the American artillery, but Gretzler at Domevre was up on the plateau from which he could watch the action. Gaghagen in his huge dugout at Minorville was so far underground that, as he said later, except for trouble on his lines he should hardly have known there was anything extraordinary going on.

The "Old Man"—Col. Voris

Koser gives a realistic description:

"By one o'clock of the morning of September 12th the First Corps office with its four boards was ready for the offensive.

"At that hour I was asleep. At ten minutes past, our barrage opened up. Suddenly the whole world rocked. It was magnificent, and it was terrible. I sat up in my bunk to listen. Just then, in burst our Chief Operator, Mike Lynch, calling for me to turn to and help the night man, Dave MacRonald.

"The very first call I answered was from the C. G. of the Fifth Division, who asked for 'Buster 3,' the code for General Craig. No man in the world could have refrained from 'listening' in for a moment. The C. G. said that everything was going fine, no retaliation fire. Each Division of the Corps was heard from during the next half-hour, and when the first let-up came I stole out on to the hill to have a look about. I'll attempt no description of the scene. If I did justice to it, no one would believe me. All along the salient was an inferno of fire, while the mighty thunder of the artillery kept the skies and earth throbbing. For fifteen minutes I gazed on this greatest artillery concentration the earth has ever seen, and then ran back to the office.

"Our board wasn't very busy until the Zero Hour, 5 A. M. But when the Infantry went over, hell burst loose in

that office. There were four positions, and more than enough traffic for four operators. I worked from three to eight in the morning, took two hours off, came back at ten, was relieved at twelve, went back at two and then stuck it out pretty much uninterruptedly until late in the evening. The office was like a madhouse that first day, the boards were too close together and we all yelled like furies to make ourselves heard. Artillery, Signal Corps, Ambulance, Infantry, Aviation, Tanks, Pigeon Service, Gas, Engineers—all pell-melled into this office, each in a desperate hurry and fighting for right of way. Sometimes, when I look back on that day, I feel that should I ever be asked whether I know anything about operation, I can truthfully say that once upon a time I had a bit of experience with a little board tucked away beneath a hill 'way off in a neck of the woods you've never heard of."

These details kept their exchanges working, and repaired the frequently torn wires. When the direction of the advance was determined, Colonel Voris ordered an open wire line run through Lironville to Limy. Light crossarms with Repp insulators and other material were brought up from Toul, and Murdaugh started his circuits north from Domevre. The work progressed rapidly through Manonville to Noviant as the French poles were still almost intact. But after the first kilometer north of Noviant all poles were gone and new ones had to be cut from the neighboring forests and carried to the road.

The advance across the sector was so rapid that on the first day Saizerais seemed to drop into the S. O. S. Prisoners by the thousands were collected in a field back of Corps Headquarters. The machinery for handling them was swamped. One gang of five hundred came down the road. Four M. P.'s, two mounted and two on foot had them in charge. They halted for a rest just as dusk was gathering. As one of the guards dismounted a prisoner leaped at the horse. The whole crowd instantly came to life. There was no excitement among the M. P.'s, however. A couple of well directed shots, resulting in as many dead Germans, convinced the captives that their life expectancy was infinitely longer as prisoners than as "bullet dodgers"—especially when the bullets were coming from American pistols.

On the second day, a counter-offensive was started by the enemy against the 23rd Infantry of the Second Division. Artillery support was needed badly and the divisional artillery could not reach the oncoming Boches. Corps Headquarters was called to see if word could be delivered to the divisions to the right or left. Corps Headquarters telephoned to the 82nd Division and to the 5th, but neither of these was within range. There was only one thing left, and that was to call on the French artillery. But the line was in trouble. Craigmile and Lester who were at the switchboard trying to make the connection for General Craig, the First Corps Chief of Staff, were at their wits' end. However, they set about examining the circuits and found a break

between the French board and its connection to the trunk leading to the French artillery board in another part of the town. They cleared the trouble in three minutes and the French artillery set down a barrage which enabled the 23rd Infantry to stop the attempted German action.

According to the plans at General Headquarters, the American Forces were to carry on two offensives during September. The St. Mihiel attack was to begin around the 10th, and about September 25th an American force was to move on the Argonne. The plans provided that the First Army Corps was to assist in opening the St. Mihiel drive, but on the fourth day was to withdraw and move to the west to take part in the Argonne offensive.

The Corps was withdrawn as prearranged. On the seventeenth Lieutenant Hasskarl with his "flying squadron" left to prepare the new Headquarters with telephone facilities.

Throughout the eighteenth preparations were made for moving all of the Corps troops, including the 406th, and as night gathered, a convoy consisting of over a thousand trucks and other motor vehicles was on the roads headed for the new center of action.

CHAPTER XXI

The Argonne

RIGID orders had been issued to envelope the transfer of troops from the St. Mihiel region in the greatest secrecy. No vehicles of any kind were to be allowed on the roads before one hour after sunset nor after one hour before sunrise. During hours of daylight all vehicles were to be off the roads and concealed under trees. No camp fires were permitted. The end of the column, made up of the 322d Field Battalion and the 406th Telegraph Battalion left Saizerais by the light of a brilliant moon shortly after nine o'clock. When the train reached the main road leading to Toul an artillery outfit, the large guns drawn by caterpillar tractors creeping slowly along, held up progress and the end of the Corps' column did not pass Toul until two o'clock. Daylight was beginning to break as the column passed through Void, but as rain was falling and there was no chance for Boche observation, orders forbidding daylight travel were withdrawn and the movement continued. Frequently French artillery organizations passing along the road separated the units. But the day wore on with the weary men cramped in the trucks munching their sandwiches and corned beef, and alighting to stretch whenever the column was stalled.

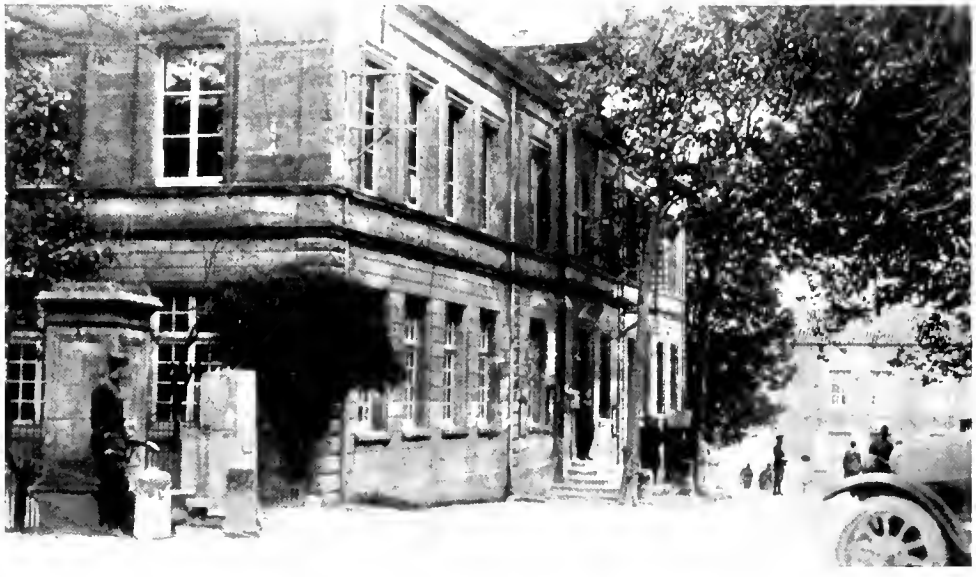
By evening the convoy had become widely scattered and the 406th proceeded under its own officers, stopping at Ligny for mess. Bar-le-Duc was passed in total darkness and Rumont was reached at midnight.

The route now led along the splendidly maintained highways which had been an important factor in the defense of Verdun. Daylight dawned on the twentieth with the 406th hopelessly stuck on the road between Fleury and Rarecourt. Each side of the road was jammed with French artillery. A long supply train and an ambulance train were trying to work their way south and the Corps troops were working north. A. E. F. orders made the senior officer present (in this case Captain Griest) personally responsible for the immediate relief of any block. After hours of incessant labor, the trucks were maneuvered through the narrow lane between the artillery. Fortunately rain was falling. Had the weather been clear, enemy bombs would have played havoc with the congested trucks and troops.

About noon Rarecourt was reached. Lieutenant Hasskarl had already established the Headquarters' exchange. Old "Vic" had become chummy with the Mayor who turned over his house and barn to the Signal men for billets while the mess and shop organization were quartered in nearby sheds.

Corps Headquarters occupied the *Mairie*. The French operated one section of switchboard and the second section was manned by Koser and Hale. In short order, Dickson with Mumford and his installers had two fifty-line American positions in service. The Battalion originally possessed four of these sections but the First Army commandeered two at La Ferte, which when activities ceased in November had not been returned.

Before the American Telegraph office was established, the French Telegraph Office at Souilly had accumulated a hundred messages for the First Corps



Corps Headquarters at Rarecourt

which Earlix "took" over the French apparatus. The French instruments print the dots and dashes on a tape from which the operator at his leisure writes out the message. But that method did not suit Earlix, who relates:

> "I went to the French office and received the messages over their wire. They had a tape machine and ticking was very soft, but I could receive much faster and more accurately by ear than by reading the tape, so I tore the tape out and received from the sound. The French operator was sending to me in their 'continental' code, and the French soldiers running the French telephone and telegraph office were acting so excitedly over my not paying attention to the tape that they nearly had a fit. After receiving twenty-five messages my hand became tired, and I sent the orderly to our office for the typewriter. Putting the messages down on the typewriter instead of writing by hand, capped the climax for the Frenchmen. A few days later, I invited the French corporal to see our telegraph office and he was surprised beyond measure."

The American telegraph office was placed in a small building in the school yard nearby, and as the telegraph business increased, Earlix with his detail were handling over sixteen thousand words daily.

Major Wattles from the Third Corps at Rampont visited the Battalion on the afternoon of the arrival and found a sleepy crowd after their two nights and a day on the road. But more work was ahead. The French were planning to leave the sector and the Corps was to take over the operation of the area switchboards and lines on the following day. Plans were made for handling twelve exchanges.

The next morning, September twenty-first, details took up their new duties, first struggling with the records of the lines which entered the switchboards. At the same time survey details started over the region to gather data about the location of lines so that Captain Gauss might keep his circuit map up to date. In addition to the one at Rarecourt, the principal exchanges in the Corps net were at La Vignette, Clermont and Auzeville; these three, situated along the main route from St. Menehould to Verdun, were the bases of the 77th, 28th and 35th Divisions respectively, which were to open the Argonne attack. Lieutenant Guy was stationed at Clermont to supervise this forward lateral axis. Next in order of importance was the old French Army Headquarters at Triaucourt where Gaghagen with a small group operated the French switchboard. Scattered between Triaucourt and the forward lateral were exchanges at Futeau, Beaulieu, Froidos, Lavoye, Grange le Comte, Autrecourt, Brizeaux and Foucaucourt, all operated by the 406th.

The old French communication net to the rear of the forward lateral was in excellent condition and quite complete, this region having formed the left wing of the defenses of Verdun in 1916. The liaison officer, Lieutenant de Lauriston, became particularly helpful to the Corps Signal Officer in this area

Outside the "P. C." (Post of Command) at Clermont

because he had personally directed much of the construction centering around Clermont. There was, however, to be greater concentration of troops in this area than ever before. To provide for additional demands on the telephone service, Miller and Gretzler set out to place four circuits between Rarecourt and Clermont as the latter was an important center on the main axis of advance mapped out for the First Corps.

The Clermont exchange was located in a huge dugout on the side of a hill from which could be seen the whole valley of the Aire as it stretched northward toward Varennes. From an observation post at the top of the hill, which was reached through a long dark tunnel at the side of the exchange, could be seen the German positions in the neighborhood of Vauquois and the eastern edge of the Argonne. The exchange equipment comprised two French switchboards. Outside of the exchange was a high tower which formed a terminal for the lines connecting to the exchange and also the test point for some fifty circuits which passed this point but did not enter the exchange. Long had a real job classifying these lines. The French details had been removed from this and all other exchanges in the Corps area except Rarecourt as soon as the Corps troops arrived. All of the sketches and records were in French or Italian as the Italians had recently vacated the Argonne sector. However, the men in charge of the exchanges and surveys prepared the data and Captain Gauss completed an up-to-the-minute circuit map.

Just when Colonel Voris determined to start a new open wire line running

north from Clermont, the Corps commandeered many of the Battalion trucks. Eighteen were dispatched in charge of Urffer to report at Bois Lavoye. Others were sent to Souilly to haul wire from the army signal park to the divisions. Urffer and his detail with a load of ammunition started from Bois Lavoye on a long trip:

"The ammunition details were of the hair-raising variety, for on these trips the 75 mm. shells had to be moved up to the 'second position,' meaning the one that the guns would reach following the success of the attack. The larger ones were to be hauled up to the former location of the 75's, this being the future position of the 155's and the 240's.

"As nine cars was the limit in one section, our train was cut in two, and I was put in charge of the first which consisted of heavy trucks. Our light trucks were in the second section which was in charge of a noncom from the First Corps balloon section.

"The roads north from a certain village were supposed to lead me to the 155 positions of the 35th Division. Such were the directions given by some officer who evidently had never tried to find these positions himself for he was all wrong. When I reached the zone of action, no officers knew of any 155 positions. However, big guns were arriving and going into positions along a field about three hundred yards north of the main road. These big guns were being moved by tractors which dug up the roads to such an extent that motor trucks were stuck in the mud and movement was held up for long periods. To make matters worse and causing still more confusion, the Germans commenced shelling the roads and fields throughout the entire section. Somehow during the night while I was walking ahead getting information, my section got tangled up and when I got back, three of my 'D' Company men with their trucks had gone. I could not find any trace of the missing men. I did find two 'E' Company men during the search and I promptly attached their two truck loads to my train. After a trying effort which lasted about seven hours, we managed to locate the spot designated as the 155 positions, 35th Division, and unloaded. To negotiate the return journey we hooked the five trucks together as closely as possible and started 'home.' All but three men of the first section had done their work as per orders. Those men, Wm. Dobbie, Irving Kreider and George Erb, were thrown out of the train by being tangled up with an artillery regiment also moving up, and by the time they had extricated themselves from the horses and guns they were up against the road barriers of the reserve trenches and could plainly hear the artillery going into action. Kreider and Erb managed to connect up with the second section and came home with them, while to Mr. Wm. Dobbie goes the medal, for the Scotchman saw a 155 in action, and one place was as good as another to him. So friend Dobbie carried his 155's right to the men who shipped them to Fritz. He managed to do this and still beat the rest of the detail back to our station by six hours."

As the time for the opening of the attack approached, the line north from Clermont, planned by Colonel Voris, was started so as to be ready when the divisions began to advance. Construction on this line, which became familiar as the "high line," continued until the Armistice. It was built some two hundred meters away from the main highway to safeguard it should the highway be shelled. And there seemed every chance that this highway might receive

"Shipping Them to Fritz"

attention from the enemy, as shells were constantly falling around Clermont. Poles were cut along the edge of the forest and carried across the fields. The men were kept scattered as much as the work would permit, so as not to attract too much notice. All of the men that could be collected were used on the new line and a plea was sent to the Army that it take over the exchanges in the rear areas to release the men for work on the forward line. But these little exchanges were not on the American Army axis of advance and the Army Signal Officer perferred lending to the 406th a company from the 401st Telegraph Battalion to help with the construction. All of the men of the 322d Battalion who were not otherwise engaged were also loaned to Lieutenant Price and the line grew rapidly past Neuvilly and toward the front.

When on the afternoon of September 25th a field order was issued which set the following day for an attack, some of the small offices toward the rear were abandoned and circuits "cut through" to relieve as many maintenance

men as possible for the forward areas. The exchanges along the advance lateral had become increasingly active as the divisions moved from these bases toward their positions in the lines. They took with them their Signal men and left the 406th Battalion to carry on not only the Corps business but

The Bridge at Boureuilles

that which developed from the administrative work of the divisions as well.

At Vignette where Murdaugh was located, plans were made to move the switchboard in case the Germans should begin to shell the town, from the little frame building half buried in the side of the hill to a large and secure dugout nearby. As a further indication to Murdaugh at Vignette that attack was near, mounted couriers arrived and he was instructed to establish an advance message center for the Corps, using the mounted men to carry messages should the circuits between La Vignette and Corps Headquarters be shelled out of service. Murdaugh says:

> "This as good as told us that the band was going to play that night. Up to this time only an occasional shell came rolling in. We were thankful that in the advance the wires held to the rear of us and that the mounted runners did not have any errands back to Corps Headquarters."

The offensive started with a barrage at eleven-thirty on the night of September twenty-sixth over the whole front, the First Corps holding the left sector. It seemed as if all of the artillery in the world had been concentrated, making

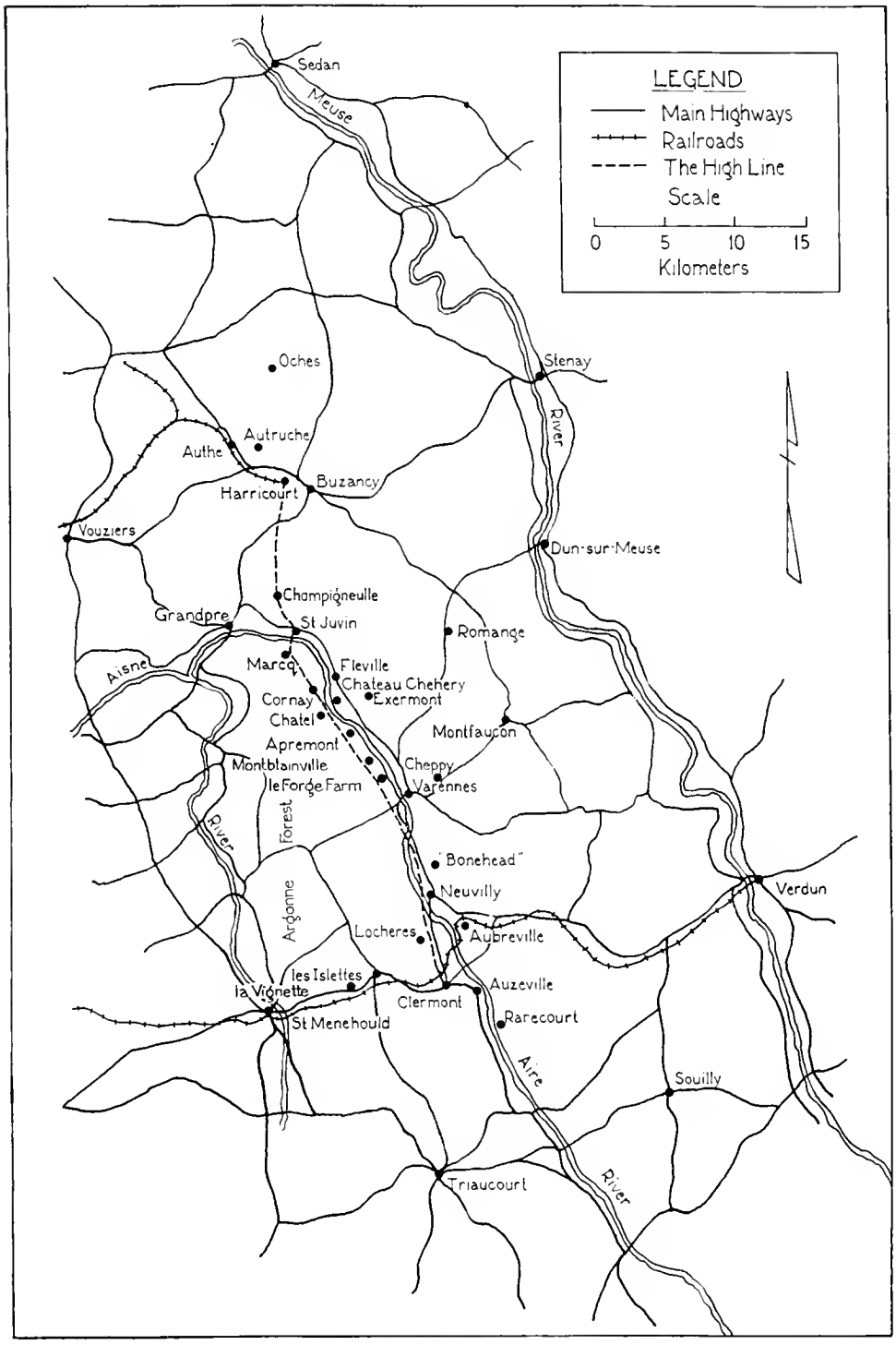
the sky a blaze of light and quaking the earth with the terror of its explosions.

The next morning the reports were of most satisfactory progress and the high line was pushed ahead, while Woodward, Miller and Tritle were sent forward to make surveys. Now that the advance had started, the divisions needed more wire and the trucks of the 406th were dispatched to the Army and loaded for the divisions in line. Their progress was hampered by the crowded roads. And the bridge at Boureuilles had been destroyed by the Germans. To make the congestion worse, two mines had been exploded near Boureuilles, effectively blocking the roads. The trucks were jammed without turning a wheel for sixteen hours and many Americans were killed and wounded by the well directed shell fire. Although shells were landing all around, the six drivers of the 406th escaped injury, the only "casualty" being a button which was shot from Kreider's coat.

It could not be determined whether the attack would follow north along the Argonne Forest or northeast through Baulny, but Corps Headquarters decided to establish an advance P. C. at Cotes de Forimont. Lieutenant

The "High Line"

Price was recalled from his work on the high line, and collecting his P. C. gang under Cowan, he hurried to Forimont which had just been vacated by the 35th Division, and installed the switchboards. The Chief of Staff distinguished the exchange by assigning to it the code of "Bonehead." The new open wire line had been completed to Neuvilly, at which point circuits were connected


LEGEND
Main Highways
Railroads
The High Line
Scale
0 5 10 15
Kilometers
Sedan
Meuse
Oches
Stenay
River
Autruche
Authe
Buzancy
Harricourt
Vouziers
Dun-sur-Meuse
Champigneulle
Grandpre
St Juvin
Romange
Aisne
Marcq
Fleville
Chateau Chehery
Exermont
Cornay
Chatel
Montfaucon
Apremont
Montblainville
Cheppy
Varennes
le Forge Farm
River
Forest
Argonne
"Bonehead"
Neuvilly
Verdun
Locheres
Aubreville
les Islettes
la Vignette
Auzeville
Clermont
Rarecourt
St Menehould
Aire
Souilly
Triaucourt
River

THE ARGONNE

to "Bonehead," this work being completed about nine in the evening with the rain pouring in torrents.

Strange as it may seem, there were a few men in the Battalion who had as yet avoided intimate contact with cooties. Tomlinson, possibly because he had been a cook, was one of these. He was in the "Bonehead" detachment, having been transferred at his own request from mess duty. That the new home was not the most pleasant place, even in war time may be gathered from his remarks:

> "Some twenty of us were sent up to this dugout, which was one of a series on the French side of a hill. It was here that I found my first cootie. Great excitement stirred the men and a general cootie hunt was started. Such a time as we had taking baths in a basin! We stayed at 'Bonehead' for about five weeks, during which life was one mad scramble, first away from cooties and then after something to eat."

While everybody was working at top notch, another call came to the Battalion to appoint men for the Army Candidates School. Dickson and Lutz were the men sent away. The hole left vacant in the office at Rarecourt was filled by taking Gretzler from his dugout at Grange le Comte, and Buehler was made top sergeant to succeed Lutz. The new candidates went through the school with flying colors. Lieutenant Dickson was made Assistant Signal Officer of the 41st Division and Lieutenant Lutz was placed in the 312th Field Signal Battalion.

Hasskarl and Guy remained in charge of the exchanges at Rarecourt and Clermont as the Signal Officer of the Corps insisted that commissioned officers remain at these important places. Foust took over the construction of the high line and pushed it on toward Boureuilles. To facilitate the work, the men were moved to Varennes. To Meigs had been assigned the supervision of operation and maintenance.

During the first week in October the bulk of the Battalion's work was far north of Rarecourt and the Battalion Headquarters were moved to Locheres, a small village on the edge of the Argonne, also occupied by the 322d Battalion and a dressing station of the 28th Division. Locheres had been occupied by many troops and it was full of rats. Hardtack had a wonderful time assisting the men in hunting the rodents. The rats seemed to be particularly fond of Company "E's" clerk, Grimm, especially at night. He decided to find the reason, and upon investigation he discovered that Giles had been storing cheese beneath the straw bed. Needless to say, thereafter, Giles did not use Grimm's bed for a larder. The shops were installed in a large barn and the mess organization in another. At this time, Lieutenant Schmidt joined the Battalion and was appointed Battalion Adjutant to relieve Sergeant-Major Magill who had been doing double duty since the beginning of September.

Lieutenant Foust's detachment was in pup tents with batteries of 75's both in front and in back of them. These guns drew the fire of the enemy but despite the distractions, the second week in October saw the open circuits completed to Varennes. All of the important circuits south of Varennes were cut over to the high line and communication between "Bonehead" and the divisions was very satisfactory. Foust continued the line to Montblainville. From that point north, the construction was turned over to Lieutenant Meigs.

On the Neuvilly-Varennes Road

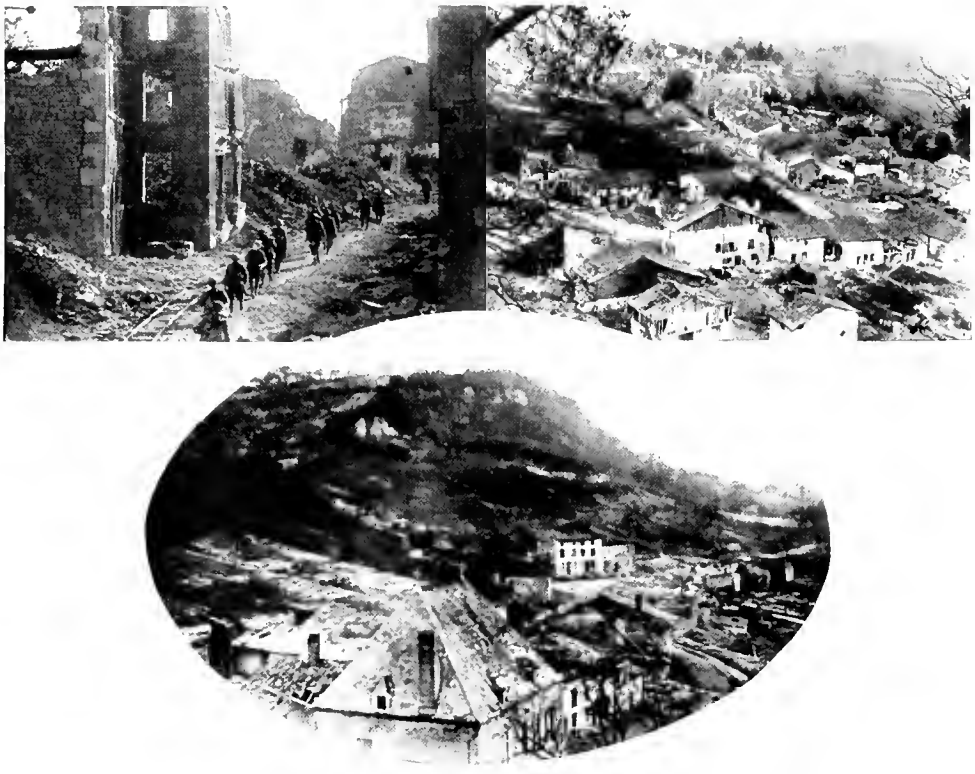
His detachment with a detail from the 322d Battalion salvaged many of the poles upon which the Germans had strung their camouflage screens along the roads toward Cheppy, and used them between Montblainville and Exermont. From the latter town north there was a line built by the enemy and as almost all of the poles were in good condition, they were utilized to reach Apremont.

At some points it was necessary to work directly in front of American Artillery. The shells on their way to the enemy scarcely cleared the heads of the construction men. At such places it was worse than useless to erect poles, for they would have been knocked down in short order. So holes were dug and poles left for erection as soon as the guns changed location.

Each morning it was Captain Griest's duty to report at Colonel Voris' office in Rarecourt to go over the situation and read the reports of operations. On October tenth, the Colonel informed the Captain that he had been commissioned a Major. The new Major continued to command the Battalion

during the remainder of the war and until it was prepared for return to the United States.

Meigs carried the high line as far as Apremont, but the Boche still occupied the forest close by and machine gun nests infested its eastern edge. Small groups went forward and reached Chatel Chehery. But on account of



1—Varennes 2—Chatel Chehery 3—Cornay

conditions in that section it was decided that the high line had been carried as far as was then necessary.

During this lull Lieutenant Meigs moved his detachments into a dugout in Varennes so they would be closer to the scene of operations when construction should start again. He also desired to reserve this dugout as a test point in case the Army should complete a forward lateral then being constructed. Although the troops had advanced beyond Chatel Chehery, the roads near Varennes were still badly congested by long trains of supplies going north and trains of wounded moving south.

At this time two more officers were lost to the Battalion. Foust and Guy were returned to the United States for the purpose of training troops. Dad Murdaugh took charge of the office at Clermont, and Gretzler continued at

Rarecourt. The duties of adjutant again fell upon the shoulders of Magill as Lieutenant Schmidt was put in command of Company "E."

Work on the high line was resumed when the 28th Division drove the enemy back. At Apremont the line joined another German line which was in such good condition that the work went on rapidly until Chatel Chehery was reached.

The enemy made a strong stand around Marcq and Grandpre, but at the same time there were persistent rumors of a break in the German morale.

It was decided to place additional circuits on the line between Varennes and Chatel Chehery. The 406th started at the north end assisted by a company from the 322d, while the Army Signal Office agreed to start work at the south end. The rain was falling and the road along the west side of the Aire valley was choked with the heavy traffic of supplies for the fighting troops. The 406th finished the circuits from the exchange at Chatel Chehery to the point where the high line met the main road, but the Army troops were caught in the jam and failed to reach the job. Lieutenant Meigs with his trusty detail from the 406th continued work until long after dark, and starting again early the following morning, completed the circuits.

Chapter XXII

"Bonehead"

THE lull in the Argonne attack gave the construction details an opportunity to prepare for the next move. But the operators at their switchboards in the dugouts were busier than ever as plans were made for a renewal of the advance. Tact, diplomacy, judgment, coolness, and a ready wit were necessary to cope successfully with the many situations which were bound to arise in dealing with the "subscribers." It will be recalled that in the United States during the war, commercial telephone service had to give way at times to the demands of the emergency service required by the government. And the girls at the switchboards had no easy time satisfying the requests for service which in many cases seemed urgent to the user of the service, but which in reality were of secondary importance when compared with government calls which had a direct bearing on the war situation.

Consider then the men at the switchboards near the front lines, who were at the beck and call of officers as they directed the progress of actual battle. Every officer thought his calls should receive immediate attention. This was perfectly natural. Many times the calls were for help, sometimes for more

men, sometimes for ammunition. Perhaps there was need for an artillery attack to repulse the on coming enemy; or it may have been important information to be communicated to the rear, or orders to be transmitted to the front. Consider the necessity for quick communication, and couple with it the shell torn wires and the noise and confusion from explosions of bombs and the firing of guns and a picture of the life in a front line exchange may be visualized.

There were regulations which stipulated that certain officers could secure a connection to a desired telephone even though that telephone were in use. On one occasion the Chief of Staff at Rarecourt called for a certain General. The General was talking but the Chief of Staff had the right of way. Koser who was at the board, "cut in" on the General's line:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but—"

"I'm using this line," was the response in such a tone that Koser could see visions of a court martial. Just then the Chief of Staff came back and his demands were put in such language that Koser could see visions of two court martials. What to do? It was a question. Koser decided that he would prefer the General's wrath to that of the Chief of Staff. So he cut in on the busy line and thundered,

"The Chief of Staff demands immediate preferred connection on this line!"

It had the desired effect.

Sometimes there were humorous incidents. Gallo was operating at "Bonehead." A lieutenant asked for a connection. When the connection was established Gallo could get no answer from the lieutenant who had placed the call.

"Hello! hello!" called Gallo. No response.

"Hello, Bonehead!" he repeated several times.

This evidently revived the lieutenant for he came back:

"Who's a bonehead? Young man, do you know who you are talking to?"

"No, sir."

"Well, this is Lieutenant ——— and I want you to understand that I'm no bonehead."

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name and organization?"

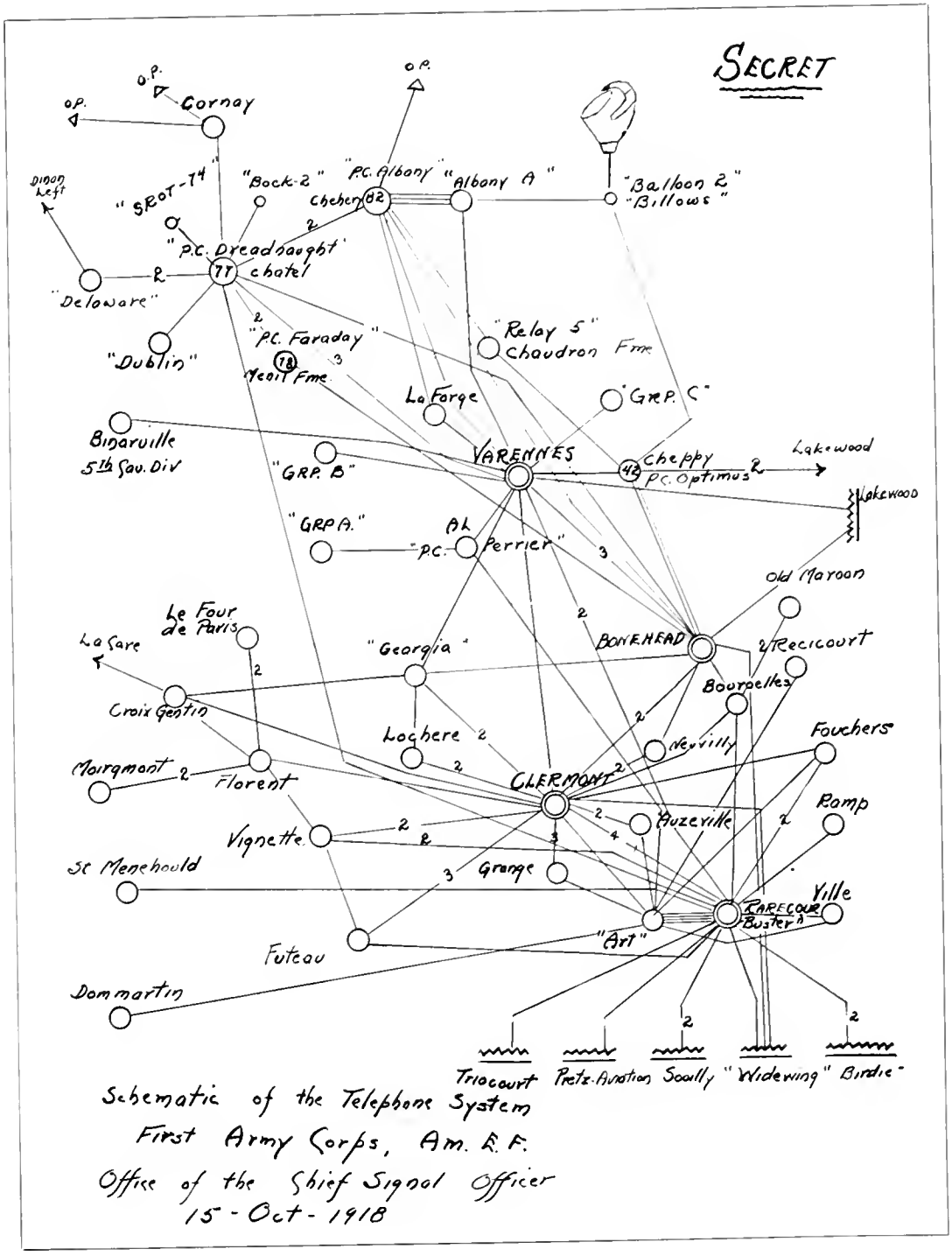
"I don't know, sir," from Gallo, which was in accord with regulations.

"You don't know? I'm going to report you."

Gallo was too busy to continue the argument so he switched the lieutenent to a French operator and as he says:

"There was some real fun because the lieutenant couldn't speak French and the operator couldn't understand English, so I left him to cool off."

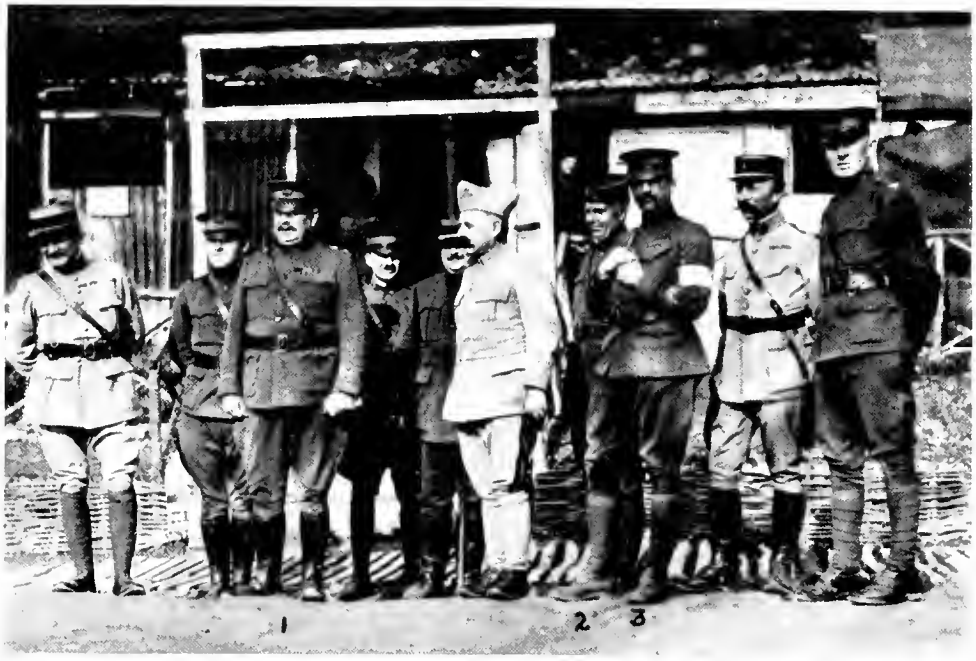
When the lieutenant reported the matter to Colonel Voris, the Signal Officer first had a good laugh, and then told him he was glad there were such efficient operators with the First Corps.



Schematic of the Telephone System
First Army Corps, Am. E.F.
Office of the Chief Signal Officer
15-Oct-1918

The operating crowd at "Bonehead" had a dull time when not on duty. There was nothing to do on the deserted hillside, and they used up their energy fighting rats, cooties, and fleas. Hannam was one of the operators:

> "The headquarters in this instance were in old French dugouts penetrating the hill possibly 100 feet, well reinforced with tin ceilings and walls to keep out the dampness. Air raids and shelling were a matter of indifference to us here; in fact, it was more or less of an amusement to stand at the front door and watch old Jerry drop them in the valley back of us.
>
> "Well, if the dugouts were intrenched, so were the rats. They



1—General Dickman. 2—Colonel Voris. 3—General Craig.

IN FRONT OF "BONEHEAD"

used to do squads right and left by battalions over the tin ceiling continuously and as soon as lights were out or it quieted down, they'd come out and run over our faces, chew our hair and eat our clothes, and they were ably assisted by fleas and cooties. The Germans were fighting every inch of ground above us here in the Argonne with their machine gun nests.

"We existed at old 'Bonehead' for about five weeks. Traffic jams were on the roads for days at a time and for mile after mile. So supplies were more or less scarce and we lived on corned beef hash and French biscuits. The seats of our trousers were worn out and I had a hole as big as a plate burnt in the back of my coat, but we

didn't care, for the news was good, and on this job we always had plenty of it."

Peterson, another switchboard operator, wrote the following while at "Bonehead":

"Time: Sunday afternoon—1 o'clock.
"Place: Cotes de Forimont.
"Scene: Our little homelike dugout, Bonehead.

"The hero sits on the lower deck of a pair of bunks with a well-worn bench pulled up to him. Candle and writing materials on the bench. Clothes, towels and accoutrements hang promiscuously about. A rat is playing hide and seek between the supports and the iron ceiling. The hero speaks to the rat in a light, musing manner:

" 'Well, old timer, here we are all by ourselves. The boys are out pulling wire and you and I left here alone. Oh, I see that snicker on your face; you'd be a lot better satisfied if I went out too, so you could come down and look through my stuff and see if I brought in anything good to eat lately. It's no use, boy, I ate that candy just about as quick as I got it yesterday and cried for more; you'll have to double time if you want to beat me at that. You little bum! You wait till a fellow puts his lights out before you come out in the open.

" 'Say, did you see that party we had this morning? You sure would have liked that, I'll bet. They were the best hot cakes I've eaten since I left old U. S. A. Yes, we had to thin out the molasses a good bit to make it go around, but she went good, and listen, bo, if we don't get the ambition to clean up that batter can, you can have what's left. No, the molasses is all gone, but you better be glad to get the batter. Why? Because we're going to light out of these parts before long. And you're going to starve to death when you don't have two governments to pay your board bill. No, there's not going to be any more soldiers around here a-tall. Didn't you hear the news? Why, the Boche has given the war up as a bad job. Found out that he didn't know as much about it as he thought. He's trying to duck out now, get out from under; maybe we'll let him and maybe we won't, but any way you take it, he loses. So, old timer you'd better prepare for a hard winter. I've been sitting around here all morning doping it over. Yes sir, it's well over a year since I've been home and sometimes it seems like ten. So this morning I just took a little ride over the briny. You've never seen the Statue of Liberty, old boy, and you've missed a lot. She's about the best piece of scenery that ever a man looked at. But after I passed her I never looked back. I had my eyes on the dock, where we landed. I crossed the ferry and hopped a train and landed in Broad Street Station in nothing flat. And there's another sight you've missed, old boy. You think we fellows are just a big edition of yourselves and that we don't know anything else but holes in the ground. Well, you've got a lot to learn. If you could just see Broad and Chestnut once, those little beads in your head would pop out like splinters from a shell. Well, boy, I had mighty important business on hand,

but I just stood there for five minutes gazing in every direction and she was all there, not a single shell hole in the street and not a splatter of nicks and tears in a building nor a pane of glass missing. And a million pretty girls around—but when I noticed them I jumped quick, for my business came back to me.

" 'I hopped on a train and went through a big rat hole that makes yours look as small as a flea on an elephant, crossed the river and hopped in a taxi, for those trolley cars are awful slow. I watched the old landmarks whiz by, sorta surprised that they were still standing, and looking just the same as a year ago; in fact, I began to wonder if I'd been over here with you fellows, in the biggest war in history. It began to fade like a dream, the Court House, the Armory, City Hall, little ole Harleigh, Browning Road, Hill Crest, Crestmont—Hey! Hey! there, chauffeur, whoa! wait a minute, turn to the left—, look out for No. 121. Yes sir, old rat, there she stood just as I left her. I was sorta expectin' to see her a different color, that old chocolate brown pretty well faded out, and I heard she was gonna be painted this month, but she looked good, for that's my home, old rat. There ain't no use you tryin' to imagine it and shinin' your eyes at me that way, and duckin' around the corner as if you were tired listenin', 'cause I'm gonna spin this yarn to the end. You've never seen anything like that little old house, and never will as long as you stay in this country. You wanta wise up and come to America after the war.

" 'Well, old rat, I forgot the chauffeur and that little old taximeter, and ran up those steps in one hop. Rat, you'll never have anybody so glad to see you as they were. They hadn't finished breakfast yet, but my Peggy was there anyhow. I can't go into all the details, old boy, you wouldn't understand them, but Mother, Dad, Sis, and the Girl were all there, and they were just cleaning up a bunch of hot cakes. Ha, that makes your eyes shine, don't it? And listen here, varmint, they weren't the kind we had, made of flour and water with watered molasses on 'em, but flour, and milk with some sugar in to make 'em brown and butter on 'em and real maple syrup. And they were on china dishes and the dishes were on a white cloth, and the sun came trickling through the curtains and glinted on silver eating tools. Ha! Ha! You poor misguided rat, you're going back to your hole. You think I'm pulling some soldier bull on you; goes to show you never lived any place but in a dugout. You want to snap out of it and get out in the world where people live, and see something. You don't believe either, I guess, that anybody would leave a feed like that just to look at me, do you? Well they did. They forgot all about eating, just to listen to stories of this business over here, but I said I'd rather tell 'em about it with a mouth full of those hot cakes, and wet my whistle with some of the best coffee in the world, *au lait*, too. You can put your hat on now, old rat, I'm through. I had to come right back here to see that old Bill Hohenzollern didn't pull any tricks on us at the last minute. He better not. He's getting off d—— easy if he takes what he's asking for, and if he

tries to take the jump on us, he'll be cutting his own throat. But remember what I told you, you'd better be looking up a home for yourself where your grub supply will be more permanent. So long, I'll see you to-night.' Curtain."

It was during this lull that Chauffeurs Gardiner and "Chubby" Johnson got into trouble. They were driving some of the officers to Locheres when one of the bearings on the car broke. They started with a motorcycle in search of another bearing. They did not return that evening and the next morning Gardiner telephoned that a car had run into them, knocking the

Building Roads in the Recaptured Territory

motorcycle into a ditch and that Johnson and he were in a hospital. Lieutenant Macfarlan went to see the patients. He located Gardiner who had been but slightly hurt, but nowhere was there any sign of "Chubby." Search was made through every possible channel to determine Johnson's whereabouts. Six weeks later a letter was received from him. He had been evacuated through various hospitals and had just recovered sufficiently to write. He was then at Bordeaux with a Signal Corps service company. He had received a cut in his leg which required twenty stitches, and his knee was so badly twisted that he was lame for months after he was discharged from the hospital. Gardiner quickly recovered but soon afterward was transferred to another branch of the service.

The advance was still held around Mareq and the Army rapidly organized the area south of Varennes. Railroads were built along the valley of the Aire,

requiring constant watchfulness on the part of the maintenance detail at "Bonehead" so that telephone lines might be rerouted or raised before the railroad trains along newly built lines should rip down the circuits. A narrow gauge line was built through the Argonne Forest necessitating train dispatching circuits and telephones.

The French had a narrow gauge road running from La Vignette through the Forest passing Croix de Pierre and Maison Forestier to a point a mile south of the old Allied front line. The Boche had brought a narrow gauge railroad south through Champ Mahaut to approximately a mile north of the old German front trenches. The Army engineers planned to build the connecting link for this railroad across what a few days before had been No Man's Land and thus reach Lançon, with a branch to Apremont, and ultimately to Grandpre which was still in the hands of the enemy. There were hundreds of tons of ammunition which had been delivered to positions in the middle of the Argonne Forest. This ammunition was needed at once at the new advanced gun positions. To repair the roads and to build new ones across the old No Man's Land, railroad connection to the quarry at Apremont was essential.

Preliminary surveys were made for the necessary Signal lines and the material for the work was shipped to Varennes. The next morning, Lieutenant Meigs started sections north and south from the railway yard at Champ Mahaut and Lieutenant Hasskarl with a detail from Company "E" started north into the forest from the vicinity of Locheres. As soon as the circuits were working on the southern portion of the line, Meigs took his men on toward Lançon.

As the Engineers succeeded in repairing the tracks leading south from Champ Mahaut, a hand car was given to Donbaugh to aid in the delivery of materials along the line. An "engineer" was needed for the car. A private in Donbaugh's colored detail said that he had been a railroad man in the States and he was put in charge of the car. For two days everything went well. There was a down grade on the line where the tracks were in bad shape and Sam had been warned to keep the car under control. Sam however, knew all about the railroad business.

The next morning Donbaugh called the roll. When he came to Sam's name there was no response. He called it again. Still no response.

"Where's Sam? Anybody know anything about him?" yelled out Donbaugh.

"Ah tell you, Sergeant," one of the darkies spoke up. "You know Sam. Well, Sam he went down de hill in the han' cah. Ah guess he went too fas'. Cauz dey buried him, down theah at de bottom o' de hill. Ah doan 'specs he'll be heah dis mohnin'."

In looking over the road and determining how poles might be cut and

erected, one was appalled at the unbelievable courage and determination of the American troops who had driven the Boches out of the strong positions. The shell fire from the heavy guns had caved in the dugouts some of which were twenty feet under ground and built of concrete. Across the waste, the Engineers pushed their tracks and the 406th followed with the dispatch wires.

The dispatch circuits were completed to Apremont and Lançon but Grandpre remained in the hands of the Germans. On October twenty-fifth, an order

Camouflaged Road in the Argonne

was published calling for an offensive. The Companies of the 406th were collected at Varennes and Locheres, preparatory to making another drive with the open wire lead—the high line. Various places along the valley were examined in an effort to obtain quarters which would be nearer the center of operations, Locheres by this time being some distance from the active work. But the divisions were still massed around Chatel Chehery and Apremont, with their rear echelons in a splendid system of concrete dugouts which the Germans had built in the Forest around Champ Mahaut and Varennes. Through the ravines leading into the valley along the edge of the Forest, there were many dugouts and groups of cabins, but these were filled with traps and poison gas and it was unsafe to enter them. The advance Headquarters of the Corps still remained at "Bonehead" with the rear echelon at Rarecourt,

this being possible largely because Colonel Voris had provided open wire telephone lines as far as Cornay, enabling the furnishing of dependable telephone service between Corps Headquarters and the divisions up the line.

Lieutenant Meigs was summoned to appear before Colonel Voris on October twenty-sixth.

"What have I done now?" thought Meigs. It was not in fear and trembling that he entered the office. But he realized that he was facing a superior officer. And he would have to swallow any medicine that was handed to him.

The Colonel sat at his desk. Meigs saluted. He felt that something was about to happen.

The Colonel shoved a bundle of papers into his hands.

"What does that mean?" demanded Colonel Voris.

"I don't—" began the Lieutenant.

"Don't talk back to me. I want an explanation."

"But Colonel—" again began Meigs.

"Didn't I tell you not to talk back to me? You've been getting us into hot water by helping yourself to whatever you wanted. Now you've got us into a fine mess."

Meigs stood on one foot and then on the other. He nervously looked at the papers in his hands, trying to make head or tail of the matter. All he could see was a bundle of old requisitions for supplies. "You're in the army now" was the only thought that came to his mind.

"Yes, sir," he said and saluted.

"Just one thing I want to say to you."

"Yes, sir," as he saluted again.

"Just read that," the Colonel handed him a telegram, "and tell me how we are going to get out of such a pickle."

Meigs took the slip of paper. He read it. He rubbed his eyes. Then he glanced out of a corner of his eye. He saw a twinkle in the Colonel's eye.

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" as only Meigs can laugh.

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" echoed the Colonel.

The telegram read: "Notify 1st Lt. Fielding P. Meigs, 406th Telegraph Battalion, he is promoted to Captain Signal Corps and have him forward acceptance of Commission and oath of office immediately."

The Germans were entrenched in formidable positions between St. Juvin and Grandpre. The American troops massed for the attack. Two telephone circuits between the Corps and the Headquarters of each division were essential. As new organizations moved into the vicinity of Cornay and Fleville, the circuits were run up the valley. With the help of the 322d Battalion, eight circuits of twist supported by stakes recovered from the German stores at the Crown Prince dump in the Forest were quickly strung across the low lands between Varennes and Chatel Cheherry.

Schmidt and McKay, the latter a new master signal electrician, set out with Major Griest to make observations on extending the high line. It seemed likely that the next advance would continue through St. Juvin, and on the hill south of Marcq there was an observatory from which with the aid of field glasses, Boche telephone lines could be traced. Maps captured by the divisional signal officers showed clearly the organization of the Boche territory, not only the telephone and telegraph lines, but also the supply depots and centers of industry. With the aid of these maps, the field glasses served to indicate what the Signal Corps could count upon in pushing the lines ahead. Near the top of the hill, American artillery had established a "flash ranging" station equipped with a telescope. From this telescope the artillery men were spotting the positions of the Boche guns by watching the flashes, and they permitted the Signal men to use the telescope for checking the course of Boche telephone lines.

A large connecting tower was observed in a cemetery to the north of St. Juvin which seemed an ideal objective for the high line. Materials were hauled as secretly as possible into Marcq to be ready as soon as the advancing troops cleared the way. In the meantime, the north end of the circuits were overhauled to the crest of the hill and many self-appointed "free subscribers" were cut loose. The balloon and artillery organizations carried with them men experienced in telephone wiring who had connected telephones to the circuits, thereby securing service.

Ruins of Grandpre

As preparations were being made for fast work when construction started, another call came for appointees to the Candidates School. Murdaugh and Collins were dispatched to Langres and obtained their commissions the following February. The Battalion thereby lost two more valuable men.

At the end of October the Battalion trucks were commandeered to go all the way back to Army Headquarters for signal supplies for the divisions which were assembling for the drive. The organization scheme prepared by the Chief Signal Officer provided that supplies be delivered by the Army as far as Corps Headquarters and from there to divisions by the Corps troops. This organization was not perfected, and the 406th throughout this operation hauled wire all the way from the Army to the divisions and in addition frequently hauled ammunition to the artillery positions.

After the Marne advance, Colonel Voris with Majors Hubbell and Behn, prepared a report of the Signal Corps activities, recommending that the responsibilities of Signal Corps troops be shouldered by fewer men than were comprised in the field and telegraph battalions. After the St. Mihiel offensive, Colonel Voris reported to General Headquarters that he would be willing to try running his Corps with the Field Battalion alone. Late in October there was a rumor that the 406th would be relieved and transferred from the First Corps to the Third Army which was then being formed. Immediately, details from the 322d Battalion were attached to each of the exchanges run by the 406th, to observe methods of switchboard operation. But while this arrangement for training was being completed, the new offensive started and the Field Battalion details were withdrawn to work around division headquarters.

On October thirtieth, Captain Meigs and Lieutenant Schmidt organized their forces for continuing the line north of Mareq early the next morning. As the section in which they were to work would be under enemy observation, these officers were instructed to keep their men in small detachments.

The officers were to patrol the section constantly. There was a heavy fog as the work started and good progress was made in clearing the old Boche poles of scrap wire and in pushing the new copper wires while the visibility was low. Later the sun came out, and driving the mist away, disclosed to the Boche observers the glistening copper. A scattering machine gun fire was turned on the wires. Then the shells began to arrive from the German batteries and the men in the artillery observation posts on the hill objected to allowing the work to continue as it was drawing fire on the artillery positions. Captain Meigs told them that his orders were to stick until driven to cover by enemy fire. But the shells soon began to fall so close to the line that work was impossible. One shell sent a fragment through a wire which Riley was tying to the pole. The fragment had bounced off the pole on which he was working, but "Pat" stuck to his job until he had finished.

Lieutenant Colonel Kelly

Later in the day work was resumed. Lieutenant Schmidt's men were working from the foot of the hill. Captain Meigs' crowd were nearer the top. When the American batteries on the south slope opened fire, the shells on their way to the Boche scarcely cleared the tops of the poles. The whine as they flew past was continuous, and the breeze could be distinctly felt. This seemed a little too close for comfort, but Forwood, Haislop and Spangler completed the job, climbing the poles until they could just reach the wires and fasten them with their arms stretched high above their heads. The next day to take advantage of the fog, another early start was made. But the artillery commander had stationed four of his captains along this section of the line with instructions that no Signal men should be allowed on the north slope of the hill. Captain Meigs visited the commander in his dugout and put up such a strenuous plea that he was allowed to continue the work until the fog lifted.

When the attack started, and the Germans were driven back, the Corps decided to move its advance P. C. to Chehery. The Chateau had been occupied by the 80th Division which was moving to Fleville—coded "Fleabite" by that old friend of the 406th, Major Kelly, who had been made Lieutenant Colonel and was the Signal Officer of the Division. Lieutenant Hasskarl arrived at Chehery in the afternoon to put up the switchboards and install the wiring. The 80th Division switchboard had been located in a well reinforced corner of the basement. But since the enemy was being pushed toward the north, it was decided to place the Corps switchboard and telegraph offices in more comfortable quarters on the first floor. The wiring was completed that night much to the satisfaction of General Dickman, Commander of the First Army Corps, who had succeeded General Liggett. The latter was now in command of the 1st Army.

Chapter XXIII

"Kamerad!"

NOW that the Corps had moved its advance P. C. to Chatel Chehery, the Battalion sought quarters in the neighborhood. Captain Meigs had reserved a few dugouts near the town where the construction sections from both Companies were temporarily quartered. But Battalion headquarters, Company offices, shops, mess and supply detachments remained at Locheres, twenty kilometers to the rear. No transportation was available to move them forward, for nearly all of the Battalion trucks were engaged in hauling wire to the divisions. There was also a detail maintaining the office at Rarecourt, fifteen kilometers further to the south.

On the morning of November 2nd when the attack was renewed Colonel Voris with Colonel Behn decided personally to investigate the signal facilities at St. Juvin. They estimated that the infantry would complete the occupation of Champigneulles in about two hours. The Signal officers were surprised to find very few soldiers around St. Juvin and almost no sign of life in the valley between this town and Champigneulles. Later they learned that the infantry had fallen behind schedule, and when they were wandering around the hill below St. Juvin this slope was in advance of the American troops.

Another man who prowled around St. Juvin somewhat prematurely was Giles. He had been detailed, by request of the sergeant in charge of the Corps

pigeons, to assist in delivering birds to the divisions. Giles mounted his motorcycle and started with the sergeant and a load of pigeons to St. Juvin. The road was under heavy bombardment, American and German dead lying everywhere. Ambulances were not allowed on the road, but because Giles displayed the Signal Corps flags on his motorcycle and was carrying pigeons, the guards permitted him to pass. Just beyond St. Juvin, machine guns were sweeping the road. It was impossible to proceed farther. He turned back into the town and there found the officer to whom the birds were consigned. After hours of driving along roads torn with shells, and under constant fire he made his way back to the Battalion.

Grandpre was bitterly contested by the Germans, who made a desperate stand on the high ground at the north edge of the town. They were kept so busy that they paid little attention to the signal line, and both Companies of the 406th rushed the construction in the direction of St. Juvin.

The hunt for quarters nearer the front eventually brought results. Colonel Voris suggested that the 406th take possession of a building which had been a German soda water factory. The large stable of this place was floored with concrete and the roof seemed to be in good condition. Headquarters was established here, and the day was spent in persuading an engineer outfit to remove their horses and mules which, being too feeble to go up the line, were quartered in the building. During this and other advances many draft animals, when they had become entirely exhausted from dragging the heavy vehicles over the almost impassable roads, were abandoned to die along the roadside. At times the faithful animals recovered and wandered aimlessly over the country. One of them made his home with the Battalion at Locheres, and was considered the particular property of Shinfessel. When the transfer to St. Juvin was ordered Shinfessel was at a loss to know what to do with his good old friend. By a stroke of salesmanship he disposed of the animal to "Red" Sebring. The latter then had an elephant on his hands until Captain Meigs came along and offered two francs for it. Sebring accepted "tout sweet." Just as this transaction was completed the outfit to which the horse originally belonged returned through Locheres and took it away from Meigs. Shinfessel and Sebring kept out of the Captain's sight.

The Field Battalion installed a switchboard amidst the wreckage of St. Juvin, and Meigs and Schmidt continued their efforts with the construction sections until they had connected the high line through to this exchange. As soon as the circuits were completed, many of them acted queerly. This was found to be due to wires attached to the lines by troops between Cornay and Marcq. Throughout the afternoon and evening and again the following day, the lines were patrolled and the telephones disconnected.

This long line which had been started at Clermont just before the opening of the Argonne offensive ran through to St. Juvin, using Boche materials for a

A Dugout in the Argonne

large part of the way, including poles salvaged from the enemy camouflage system. At first when the Germans retreated through the Argonne they cut down their wires and poles to prevent the Allies from using them. Toward the end however, as one of the men put it, "the only thing they seemed to be interested in cutting down was the record for the hundred yard dash." Months later a battalion commanded by Winston, formerly of the 406th, salvaged the high line.

By November fourth, the German retreat had turned into a rout and the American infantry was being carried forward in trucks in an attempt to maintain contact with the fleeing Boches. Most of the circuits had been cut through the exchange at Cotes de Forimont, and Price with his P. C. gang hurried on to St. Juvin to await orders. Hardly had he become settled in the soda water factory, expecting a brief rest after the long wade through the slow moving caravans, when information was received that Corps Headquarters was to be moved to Harricourt. Arrangements were at once made to turn over to the Army all of the Signal responsibilities in the area south of St. Juvin and plans were made to extend the high line north of that town.

Lieutenant Pearson was still at Locheres awaiting transportation for the Battalion affairs. When the trucks arrived, although they had been continuously on the road for two days, they were at once loaded and with Major Griest in command started north. Splendid time was made on the first part of the journey as the main road east of the river was almost free from traffic. A brief halt was made at St. Juvin and instructions were left with Magill to move on to Harricourt early in the morning and to leave only enough men at St. Juvin to care for testing on the high line.

Lieutenant Price's outfit had arrived at Harricourt early in the evening and was shown to a system of warehouses surrounding an old German railhead where Corps Headquarters was to be established. It was too dark to do any work that evening and unsafe to have fires or lights so the section immediately turned in for a rest. Hannam describes the situation:

> "I did not like the looks of the place; it appeared to me as if it might be popular with the bombing squadrons, and the shacks were

not very substantial. Boche planes came over about an hour later by the dozens. Frankly, I was never so scared before and would sooner go through an artillery barrage any day than to have those birds buzzing over my head, dropping their toys apparently everywhere."

The main truck train which was speeding along the road from St. Juvin turned north above Grandpre and soon ran into trouble. Near the crossroad leading toward Beffu there was a solid jam, but thinking that this might be cleared before long, every one curled up for a nap. At two o'clock in the morning the road was still blocked, and leaving the train, Major Griest started ahead to investigate. Just south of the crossroad two five-ton trucks had slid into the ditches on either side of the road and were most thoroughly stuck. Another truck in attempting to pass between the two became tightly wedged. There were high banks on either side of the road and it was impossible for traffic to pass. For a mile in each direction there was a solid line of vehicles. It seemed unlikely that the congestion would be relieved before daylight. The Major hiked back through the mud to the waiting trucks to devise a plan for reaching Harricourt by another route.

Very few vehicles had come along behind the Battalion trucks. It was possible therefore to back down the hill. This was done and just as the rising sun was casting a beautiful glow over the landscape, the Battalion pulled into Champigneulle. The road through Verpel had been jammed for three or four days and there was no other road for northbound traffic, the one leading toward Beffu being reserved for southbound traffic. Nothing could be done to hurry the movement and the trucks reached Harricourt two days later. The Battalion had received its fill of excitement while the blocked road was subjected to bombing and machine gun fire from Boche airplanes.

The Corps Billeting Officer had furnished Lieutenant Price with a layout, but this had to be changed considerably to accord with Colonel Voris' instructions. All hands immediately set to work, and temporary circuits were in service by the time the Corps officers arrived, although the Field Battalion had not been able to complete the circuits from St. Juvin. Harricourt was still occupied by divisional and artillery troops and Corps Headquarters was established in the warehouses and dispatch stations of the Boche railway terminal. In the yard

German Heavy Construction in the Argonne

Views of Harricourt

practically all of the rail joints had been blown up by the Germans or were still mined where the fuses had failed to operate. In the warehouses there remained great quantities of Boche large calibre shells and myriads of fleas.

The divisions were now at Authe, Arutruche and St. Pierremont, and as fast as details from Signal battalions reached Harricourt, they were set to work pieeing out the Boche wire circuits which ran to these towns. Colonel Kelly volunteered to provide communication between the Corps and the 80th Division at Sommauthe. In this territory the towns were unharmed and on the church steeples the Boche had displayed white flags to prevent further shelling. In some of the towns the whole civil population was still established. Everywhere there were signs of the precipitate retreat of the Germans—guns, wagons and equipment of all sorts abandoned in the fields and along the roadsides. The enemy continued the rapid retreat and was nearing Sedan and the air was rife with rumors of armistice negotiations. Corps Headquarters was in a great state of excitement.

Colonel Voris directed that the Corps axis be continued through St. Pierremont and Stonne to Raucourt, a short distance south of Sedan. This

St. Pierremont

task seemed more nearly impossible than any which had been assigned to the Signal men. Some of the men were still scattered along the roads south of Harricourt, and many of the trucks were attempting to complete wire deliveries from the Army to divisions. It began to rain and this hindered the collection of men. On the morning of the sixth, however, more sections had arrived at Harricourt, and Company "E" proceeded to St. Pierremont to repair the open wire circuits leading back to Corps Headquarters. To help with this work, Coates and Twohig started north from Harricourt. Carrying tools and material along the crowded road was a slow and tedious process. There was no possible chance of completing the open circuits before night because of the many sections between Fontenoy and St. Pierremont which had been entirely shot away. Lieutenant Schmidt therefore pieced these circuits out with twist. Throughout that rainy night with a few scattered shells hurrying their progress, the men of the two Companies plugged along with the work. Coates, after finishing the lower section, made his way to St. Pierremont to help Schmidt. By two in the morning the connections were completed and the tired and dripping men returned to Harricourt. No lights were allowed to aid in locating packs and blankets and the workers flopped on the piles of shells or on the floor to secure what rest they could. The next morning Lieutenant Schmidt was discovered sleeping in a mud puddle under one of the trucks, with Hackett on the seat above. Coates gives a picture of that night's work:

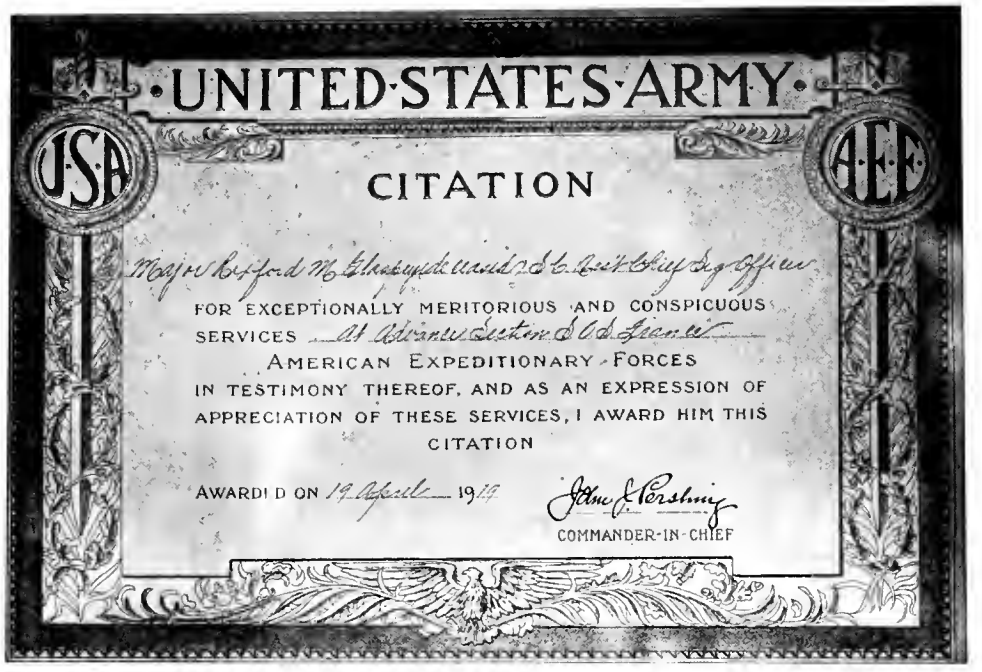
"About a mile from St. Pierremont we became stuck in the jam in the traffic and it was after twelve o'clock when we arrived at St. Pierremont. We went up the road and found a ration truck and cribbed several loaves of bread and cans of beans and heated them on the motor of the truck. We had to take the circuit back to Fontenoy and the only way to get there was to walk. We left Sergeant Vick and the chauffeur to take care of the truck and the rest of us pulled the reels up hill and down and the Lieutenant who was leading didn't know when to rest. We passed truck load after truck load of refugees who spoke a language all their own. I believe it was Flemish. They came from Sedan and had been captives for about four years."

The returns from the front indicated that four open-wire circuits would be needed to St. Pierremont immediately. The weary Schmidt was roused from his puddle and once more he collected his tired crew and headed north by way of Sommauthe. To insure the completion of these circuits before dark, the Major collected all of the men of "D" Company who had then arrived at Harricourt, to tackle the lower end of the new circuit, leaving Meigs who had just come in from St. Juvin, to organize the camp.

The lower end of the open circuits was quickly completed, but to reach Fontenoy where the work was to be resumed, required a long trip by way of Sommauthe and St. Pierremont, with every possibility of encountering hopeless jams on the road, or of carrying the tools and material up a long hill and down from the main road to Fontenoy. The men of the 406th were willing workers but they were almost completely exhausted by their efforts of the preceding days. Major Griest interviewed the captain who was in charge of the traffic on the roads to try to persuade him to open to the signal trucks the one-way road to Fontenoy. The Captain considered the situation for a moment, looked over the trucks which he was assured were all in good condition, and after the Major agreed that should southbound traffic be encountered he would, if necessary, ditch the trucks and carry the material from that point, the captain gave his consent and piloted the truck train up the road.

Major Rexford M. Glaspey

This was unexpected good fortune and at Fontenoy the men set to work


UNITED STATES ARMY
U.S.A.
A.E.F.
CITATION
Major Rexford M. Glaspey, Quartermaster Corps, Assistant Chief Supply Officer
FOR EXCEPTIONALLY MERITORIOUS AND CONSPICUOUS SERVICES as Assistant Section Chief
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
IN TESTIMONY THEREOF, AND AS AN EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION OF THESE SERVICES, I AWARD HIM THIS CITATION
AWARDED ON 19 April 1919
John J. Pershing
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Major Glaspey's Citation

with such vigor that in two hours they reached Lieutenant Schmidt's men working from the north. Schmidt had succeeded in reaching St. Pierremont, but he too had struck disheartening conditions. Poles which had been in place on the line the night before and to which the circuits of twist were attached had been cut down to repair the almost obliterated road. This made it necessary to cut poles from German lines and drag them into place. The four circuits were completed at five o'clock. But the extension leading to Stonne which was being built by the Field Battalion was not yet finished as the trucks carrying the material had been stalled throughout the day south of Oches.

* * * * *

That night Colonel Behn came up from Army Headquarters with sad news. Major Glaspey had been ill at the hospital in Toul, but because of his conscientious conception of the work for which he was responsible, he had insisted on leaving the hospital before he had fully recovered. As a result he contracted pneumonia and died at Base Hospital No. 51 on the fifth of November. Colonel Behn had become acquainted with Glaspey while at General Headquarters and had become very much attached to him. In fact every one had liked the young officer. There was not a man in the Battalion but that felt deeply his death.

Chapter XXIV

The Armistice

THERE were persistent rumors of armistice negotiations, but there was nothing in the way of official news. For the most part, there was little excitement over the reports. One night some of the men were enjoying a game of "stud" in a light-proof shack—it must have been pay day. There was a goodly sized "pot" and one of the fellows was just about to bet. A bang on the door and an ex-dispatch rider of the Battalion burst into the room. "The war is over!" he yelled. The man whose turn it was to bet, started to jump up from his seat. Jerry Hamilton grabbed him by the shoulder and unceremoniously planked him down.

"What's the matter with you? What if the war is over? Has that got anything to do with winning this pot?"

While the Field Battalion continued its effort to carry the circuits to Sedan the 406th set to work repairing the heavy lateral leads which the Germans had abandoned along the Germont-Harricourt-Buzancy road.

On the morning of the ninth startling news was received—the First Corps was to be relieved for a rest! The troops of the Fifth Corps immediately took over all of its responsibilities. There was a feeling that the end was very close

and the men of the Battalion were none too well pleased to be compelled thus to quit just when the finish of the job was in sight. But orders are orders and that day the men of the 406th scattered over the country side examining the places in which the fighting had been most intense and where the German retreat has been most rapid. Hundreds of souvenirs were collected, some of which eventually found their way to friends back home. Late in the day Lieutenant Hasskarl set off for Chehery with his P. C. section to prepare temporary quarters for the Corps, while Pearson was dispatched with Urffer to hunt up Jeff Adams who with his truck was still somewhere in the region to the north. Urffer tells of this effort:

> "A detail made up of Jeff Adams of 'E' Company and Whitlock, Fullerton and Althouse of 'D' had been sent out with orders to establish a supply dump at Stonne, a town situated about eighteen kilometers north of Buzancy. All except Jeff Adams unloaded and returned to the outfit in a couple of days. Jeff, however, was ordered to take his truck load of wire to a point beyond Raucourt and in doing this he encountered difficulties of the worst kind. The traffic was heavy and the road bad. Beyond Chehery he was mired and unable to move for about seventy-two hours.
>
> "Lieutenant Pearson and I were out on a hunt for Jeff, and on November twelfth we met him tramping along the road from Grandpre to Buzancy, thirty-five kilometers from the point where his truck was stuck in the mud. He had traveled thirty-five kilometers, much of the distance on foot with an occasional ride on a passing vehicle. We picked him up and headed for the truck. After we gave him something to eat, 'the man from Kaintuck' became more sociable. We reached the truck and found four loads of wounded men ahead of it. We came across an engineer outfit which had a Holt tractor and after two hours of strenuous digging and lugging we were on our way home."

The weather had become very cold. On the morning of the tenth, tools and supplies were chopped out of the frozen mud, loaded on the trucks and the Battalion was on its way to the south. Early in the afternoon Pleinchamp Farm was reached where Hasskarl had managed to preempt sufficient space to house the outfit. Mess was established and it did not take the men long to make themselves at home in the stables. Three new officers, Lieutenants Wright, Lee and Green, waited here to report for duty. It seemed the perversity of fate to finish the long and extremely active campaign without a full complement of officers and for replacements to arrive when the Battalion had started into a rest area.

That evening there was the customary meeting with Colonel Voris, and while the officers were talking over the possibilities of the situation a lieutenant from the Intelligence Section of the General Staff rushed into the office waving a paper and shouting, "The Armistice has been signed." The Signal

HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY CORPS

Nov. 10, 1918.

From: Chief of Staff, 1st Army Corps, U. S.

To: Chief Signal Officer, 1st Corps, U. S.

Subject: Recognition of services of signal personnel.

1. The Corps Commander desires the personnel of the Signal battalions under your control to be informed, and this information is to include truckmen, linemen, telephone exchangemen, radio-men and all others who are under your control, of his full appreciation of their services and their devotion to the interests of the service.

2. He desires them informed and that they understand that each man has contributed in no uncertain way to the success of the 1st Corps and its elements and that without their devotion to duty, the results obtained could not have been possible.

3. Incidentally, this expression of appreciation includes the Chief Signal Officer himself and those of his office force associated with him.

Malin Craig
Chief of Staff

1st Ind.

C. Sig. O., 1st Army Corps, American Expeditionary Forces, 11 November, 1918: To each and every member of the 322nd Field Battalion and 306th Telegraph Battalion, Signal Corps,

1. It is with the greatest pleasure that the undersigned transmits to you the letter of appreciation of Major General J. T. Dickman, the Corps Commander, and of Brigadier General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff of the Corps, for the wonderful work accomplished by the Corps Signal troops throughout the activities of the First American Corps.

2. No other American Corps has been called upon, nor had the opportunity to equal the achievements of the First Corps during the present war. Its activities have included the advance of July and August from Chateau Thierry to the Vesle, the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient in September, and the capture of the Argonne Forest, followed by the advance to the outskirts of Sedan in October and November.

3. That the mission of the Corps Signal troops was well done is evidenced by the above letter. The details of the masterful manner in which hardships and difficulties were overcome in the performance of this duty are known and appreciated to the fullest extent. The truckmen hauling supplies over well nigh impassable roads; the linemen and troublemen extending and maintaining telephone lines in the rain and cold and often under shellfire; the telephone, telegraph and radio detachments making innumerable installations in leaky attics or musty caves, and all working both day and night, resulted in a completed system which would be a credit to many civil plants.

4. We are now officially informed that an armistice between our Allies and the enemy has been signed, and that hostilities cease today. We must not be unmindful that the work which has thus far been so successfully accomplished is not yet complete. You may expect that the worst service is before you. Without the excitement of active operations, will more than ever come to your minds visions of home, the companionship of those dear to you, and the loss of the opportunities of civil life. A huge task is yet to be accomplished by the American soldier, and in the great confidence of your past success, we look forward toward the final completion of this great undertaking, so that when it is over, you may say as in the past,- "WE PUT IT OVER FOR OLD BONEHEAD".

Alvin C. Vorie
Colonel, Signal Corps.

B

A LETTER OF COMMENDATION

Office was emptied as if by magic. The officers hurried to the telegraph key in the adjoining room to wire Army headquarters for information. The reply came back that there was a very persistent report that the Armistice had been signed but that official confirmation had not been received. The French considered the report authentic and immediately throughout the chateau every one burst into an uproar. Up in one of the corridors of the second story, there was an old piano which had survived the Boche occupation. This instrument was quickly surrounded by a group of French and Americans and in the dim light of a few candles, which some one had been bold enough to light

Pleinchamp Farm

regardless of possible visits from the German bombers, the Frenchmen started to play the "Marseillaise." All joined exultantly in this triumphant song, and when it was finished the French joined the Americans in singing the American National Anthem.

The news had spread to the Battalion quarters in the nearby stable. The men of Company "E" were in the loft and Company "D" was immediately underneath. During the souvenir gathering, many of the men had acquired Boche pistols and ammunition. These were brought into play and a racket burst forth which resembled a dozen machine guns all in action at the same time. The roof was shot full of holes and bore the brunt of the Company "E" attack. Luckily for the Pittsburgh crowd however, the men of "D" did not shoot upwards, but peppered the walls and windows.

While the uproar was at its height the Corps Provost Marshall advanced on the barracks. But his approach was detected and when he entered the building all was quiet. He called for the noncom in charge. He received no

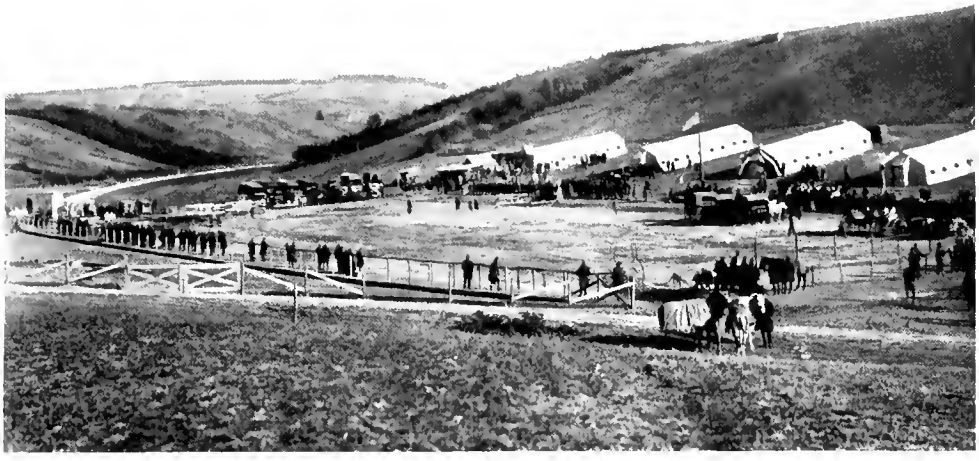
response. Every one was industriously snoring. He stumbled over arms and legs and bodies in the darkness. He finally departed cussing the whole outfit and very much to the relief of the men, Favinger and Koser particularly.

The singing in the chateau and the "fireworks" was the entire celebration for the troops marooned in the small village which the fighting of the past two months had almost annihilated. The nearest *cafe* was several hours journey to the rear, and in the rush forward all materials which might be used to help celebrate such an occasion as this had long since been consumed.

The members of the Corps had been working at top speed and under the greatest strain from the time they entered the St. Mihiel sector in September. By the time the effort in the direction of Sedan was suspended the men of the 406th were thoroughly exhausted from keeping the divisions supplied with signal material and from maintaining telephone service for the Corps. They were almost stunned. "Numbed and dumbed," was the expression of one of them. Thoughts turned now toward home. It was the first time since the arrival in France that there was something tangible on which to base hopes of returning to the States.

On the morning of the eleventh the report of the Armistice was confirmed and the Corps received instructions from the Army that all hostilities would cease at eleven o'clock. Throughout the night of the tenth and the morning of the eleventh, the distant rumble of the artillery could be heard. The Allies were on their guard against a last minute trick on the part of the Boches.

The fighting was over. Gas masks and helmets would soon fall into the discard or be hung on pegs from which they need be removed only for inspection. No longer would the roads be blocked with artillery and ammunition and ambulances. Work there was to be done, but what, or where, or when, or how much nobody knew nor cared. As "Cal" Miller put it, "Things won't be so bad now that the 'armature' is signed."



Chapter XXV

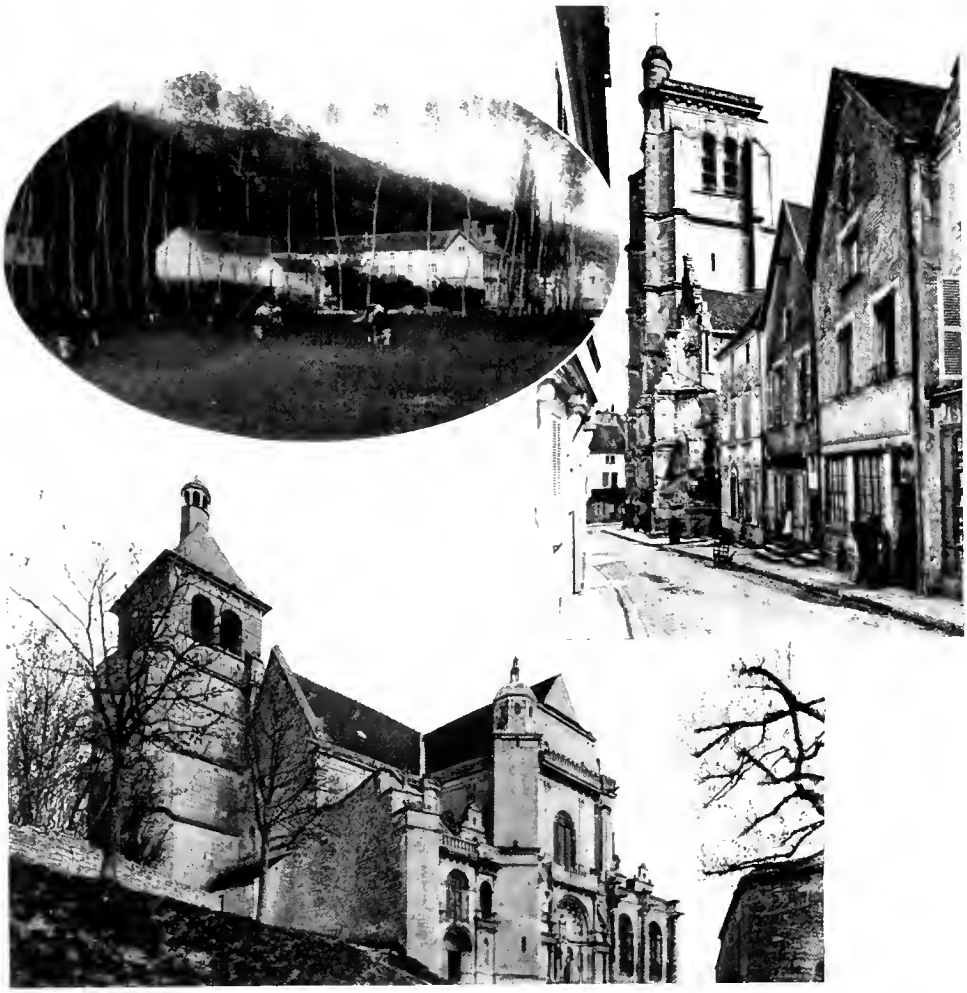
"When Do We Go Home?"

AFTER the cessation of hostilities, plans were made for forming the army which, according to the terms of the Armistice, was to occupy the territory around Coblenz. It was at first contemplated that the First Army Corps was to have the honor of leading the entry into Germany. It had been in the greatest number of drives and had made the greatest advances. However, the First Corps was on the extreme left of the American front and transportation facilities in the devastated area were poor. The motor vehicles, on account of the constant and wearing use which they had been given, were not in shape to transport the Corps troops. It was decided therefore to take the Staff officers from the First Army Corps to form the nucleus of the new 3rd Army Headquarters. The remaining troops were to be drawn from units which could more readily be delivered to the Rhine.

Colonel Voris pleaded long to be allowed to take the 406th Battalion with him into Germany, even going so far as to offer to operate with it alone and forego the additional telegraph battalion and the field battalion allowed to an Army. The Chief Signal Officer decreed that, in view of its long and active service, the 406th was to be one of the first battalions designated for return to the United States. The Battalion therefore bid goodbye to the officers of the First Corps, who started toward Dun-sur-Meuse to join the Army of Occupation.

For another week the Battalion remained in the vicinity of Chehery, and the men roamed over the fields on which not more than a month before there had been bitter fighting. Over fifty miles of twisted pair, which had been strung along the roads by the divisions during their advance, were salvaged during this period. When the wire had been delivered at Parois, the Corps troops departed for Tonnerre. Once more and for the last time, Price and Cowan, with their P. C. detail, set off in advance of the main body to establish the telephone exchange. On the twenty-second of November, the Battalion took up its quarters in the *Moulin d'Enfer* on the outskirts of Tonnerre, the men confidently anticipating Christmas at home.

Thanksgiving Day was decreed a holiday in the army and many of the



Some Views of Tonnerre

American soldiers attended a "Te Deum" sung in Notre Dame—an old church erected in the sixteenth century. But to a healthy crowd of men, dinner is the big thing on Thanksgiving. On account of the recent move, the Quartermaster was unable to provide extra food for the holiday.

The mess fund however had weathered fifteen months of foreign service and was still in fair shape. Thevelin was dispatched with a detail to comb the countryside for turkeys and chickens. In the preceding months there had been few meals which were worthy of the name. The hustle and bustle and confusion had made regular mess impossible. At the Thanksgiving dinner every man sat down comfortably and enjoyed himself in a civilized manner. Tables were arranged on a large open balcony at one end of the mill. But French weather is fickle. Just as all were seated and the attack on the turkey and sweet potatoes commenced, the threatening skies let fall a torrent of rain. It takes more than a shower to dampen the enthusiasm of a gang of hungry men. They stuck to the finish, the final sortie disposing of the mince pies over which Pemberton had labored diligently, and from the comments, successfully.

Pemberton and "Bill" Dailey were assigned the task of building a cook stove in the kitchen. Cement and bricks were necessary. They went to a stone mason. He asked a price about four times as high as "Pem" and Bill felt they should pay. They refused to buy. It was the only place in the town where the materials could be secured. After dark they took a light truck and drove up to the mason's shop. It was just across the street from the Y. M. C. A. A big show was being given there and the whole street was as bright as day from the lights in the building. Pem made up his mind that the stove was going to be built. He slipped into the "Y" and short circuited the lighting wires. This blew the fuses and put out all the lights. Huss of the Battalion was electrician at the "Y" and he put in new fuses. They blew out. He started on a hunt for the "short" but Pem had done his work well.

Meantime in the darkness across the street Pem climbed the fence and threw a bag of cement over to Bill. Bill failed to catch it, and it fell on the ground and burst. Pem did not know this and he tossed another over. The second one caught Bill on the back of the head, and buried his face in the loose cement on the ground. He sputtered, but dodged the third one. The cement and about a hundred bricks were loaded on the truck. Then Pemberton went over to the "Y" where five hundred soldiers were raving in the darkness. He removed the "short" and the show went on. The stove was built and later settlement was made for the "purchased" materials.

Captain Gauss had accompanied the Corps to Tonnerre with his old friends in the Battalion. At Colonel Voris' request he was now assigned to the 3rd Army and sent to Coblenz. He was made Superintendent of Telegraph and Telephone Service for the 3rd Army, and handled the trans-

ferring and building up of existing German circuits for the Army of Occupation. This work gave him an opportunity to study German construction and necessitated frequent visits to Berlin. He was promoted to Major and made himself so valuable to the Signal Office at Coblenz that he was not released for return to the United States until the following September.

Life at Tonnerre quickly became organized. In many respects it was the hardest part of the overseas service. Entertainments and athletic events helped to pass the time.

Captain Macfarlan (who had been promoted from lieutenant during the Argonne fight) with the help of Jerry Hamilton staged a very creditable minstrel show in the Y. M. C. A. As a result of this show, Macfarlan was taken by the Corps Adjutant as an assistant director of athletics and entertainments, and he entered actively into scheduling football and basketball games and boxing matches throughout the Corps Area.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY CORPS
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

15, February 1919.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
NO. -

I. 1. In compliance with Special Orders No. 26, Headquarters First Army, dated 9 February 1919, the 406th Telegraph Battalion stands relieved from this Corps.

2. The 406th Telegraph Battalion landed in France on August 20th, 1917, as the 1st Telegraph Battalion, Signal Reserve Corps; its designation being changed in October to the 406th Telegraph Battalion. It was one of the two first complete American Signal units to arrive in France. After a full and winter of work in installing and maintaining telephone offices and lines in the Chaumont - Neufchateau - Toul region, the Battalion was assigned to the 1st Army Corps on February 17th, 1918, being the first unit of Corps Troops, after the Headquarters Troop, assigned to the Corps.

3. During the spring of 1918 the Battalion continued to maintain and operate lines in the region of Neufchateau and up to the Toul sector, as well as working in that and the Baccarat sectors.

4. Moving with the 1st Corps in June, 1918, to La-Ferte-sous-Jouarre, the Battalion installed, operated and maintained telegraph and telephone services for the 1st Army Corps at its many headquarters during the advance from the Marne to the Vesle; in the St. Mihiel attack, and in the Battle of the Argonne and the advance to the Meuse, from the beginning of that attack to the cessation of hostilities, and subsequently at the Corps Headquarters at Tonnerre. This work was frequently done under the most adverse conditions, and often exposed to enemy shell fire. Its service under battle conditions was practically continuous from the beginning of the attack northwest of Chateau-Thierry on July 18, 1918, until the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, including in that period the installation, often on the shortest notice, and maintainance of wire communications at thirteen different Headquarters of this Corps.

5. Its work has been excellent; a record of a hard task well done, without complaining, without any need of the slightest disciplinary action; and the part it has played in keeping the Corps Staff in touch with its troops has been of primary importance in all the Corps Operations.

6. The Corps Commander takes this occasion to express his warm appreciation of the services of the 406th Telegraph Battalion as a part of the 1st Corps and wishes it God Speed in the return to the United States which it has so well earned.

By command of Major General Wright:

W. M. PASSETT,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

H. R. NELLY,
Lieut. Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant.

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Men of the 406th had been working in the Corps Telephone and Telegraph office since the arrival at Tonnerre. Early in December troops from the 1st Army replaced them. This made rumors of an early departure for America even more persistent. "When do we go home?" was heard even more frequently than "Come seven," or "Little Joe," or "Big Dick," or "Phoebe."

Football teams were formed in the divisions and a team was selected to represent the Corps troops—Miller, Haislop, Rauenswinder, Lord and Thompson

being chosen on the latter. On account of the comparatively small number of men in the Corps troops, it could not successfully compete with teams chosen from the thousands of men available in the divisions. Consequently, it was eliminated when it was decisively beaten by the 80th Division.

In basketball and boxing, the 406th fared much better. Magill organized a basketball team on which were H. M. King, Hutchinson, Poole, Seymour, Guenther and Marr. The basketball games were scheduled for Sunday afternoons in the town market-house. Here the cement floor gave an opportunity for fast play and the games were enjoyed by crowds from the French populace quite as much as by the enthusiastic spectators from the Corps troops. Magill's team won every game in which it competed.

Address Reply to
CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER, S. O. S
American Expeditionary Forces

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
HEADQUARTERS SERVICES OF SUPPLY
Office of the Chief Signal Officer

February 24, 1919

FROM: Chief Signal Officer, A.E.F.

TO: Commanding Officer, 406th Telegraph Battalion(Thru C.S.O. 5th Corps,) Tonnere-Yonne.

SUBJECT: Review of history of 406th Telegraph Battalion.

1. I have just received a copy of General Orders No. 8, Headquarters First Army Corps, February 15, in which the Commanding General of that Corps briefly reviews the history of the 406th Telegraph Battalion, and takes occasion on your relief from the Corps to commend the work of the Battalion in the warmest terms.

2. There is no commendation which is more desirable than that which comes from those with whom officers and organizations served. The history of the 406th Telegraph Battalion is so interwoven with that of the tremendous and successful work of the Signal Corps in France that it particularly deserves notice.

3. Your Battalion was one of the two that arrived first, and has borne the burden of the enormous telegraph construction work which has been the firm basis for our successful communications throughout France.

4. From construction work in the S.O.S. your Battalion has gone to duty with the First Army Corps and taken a glorious part in all of the hard fighting in which that Corps has been engaged.

5. It is a matter of pride with me to have such an organization serving with the Signal Corps, and I feel that the officers and men of your Battalion may return to the United States with the approval of your own consciences, and heartily deserving the well earned plaudits which I am sure your fellow citizens will accord to you.

E. RUSSEL
Brigadier General,
C.S.O.

According to the regulations each soldier was entitled to a seven-day leave every four months. In the sixteen months of foreign service the men of the Battalion had had practically none. At Tonnerre permission was obtained for ten per cent and later for twenty per cent of the Battalion to go at one time. The first men were assigned to Aix-les-Bains. They were given a round of entertainment, both in the Casino and in side trips, and they came back to the Battalion after their seven-day stay anxious to try it again.

Before long the Battalion leave allotments included permission to go to the Riviera. Monte Carlo was given the "once over" by those who visited this area, and Italy was so close at hand that few missed the opportunity to set foot for a moment at least, on her soil. Dobbie received permission to visit Scotland; Burnett, Conway and Magill reached Ireland; and Alfieri held a reunion with his family in Italy. The leave orders constantly became more liberal and by the latter part of December, three-day leaves for Paris had been authorized. At times more than half of the 406th was on leave at one time.

The air of impatience in the Battalion as Christmas time approached can better be imagined than described. Day after day passed and still no orders came. Home seemed as far away as it had a year ago. It must be confessed that at first there was not a great amount of enthusiasm in the preparation for the second Christmas in France. But as the holiday season came nearer and it was realized that there would be no chance to shed the old khaki, nor to put feet under the dining room table at home while sinking teeth into the drumstick of a regular, home-grown, fat and juicy gobbler, a little more interest was taken. When the day before Christmas arrived there was considerable activity around the barracks.

The mess fund still survived but just for luck a request was made to General Headquarters for a cash allowance for Christmas dinner. Not a chance! So the strong boxes were dipped into once more. Thevelin, who continued with his friends in the 406th until January when his class was demobilized, and Vance scoured the country side. They came back with a truck load of turkeys and green vegetables. Christmas Eve was spent by the noncoms with the mess organization in preparing for the feast. Throughout the active campaigns, the company messes had been combined and run as a battalion mess. At Tonnerre, however, the messes were separated and each Company provided for its Christmas spread in accordance with its own ideas. This year the regulations forbade the sending of large packages to the men in France but bundles of Christmas cards and letters from friends in the Telephone Company were eagerly devoured.

During the morning, the village bakery was the scene of great activity. Previous efforts at roasting turkeys on the United States Army field range had not been a howling success, and Pemberton and Vance for this occasion arranged with the baker for the use of his ovens. "D" Company decided to remain in its mess quarters in a stable near the barracks, but Company "E" rented a *café*, which Vance decorated with evergreen in true holiday fashion. The Battalion officers were invited to attend "E" Company's dinner, which was complete from soup to nuts. There were four hours of eating and jollity, during which belts were loosened hole by hole. If anyone left the table without a feeling of fullness, it was his own fault.

The men appreciated that the success of their dinner was due in large measure to the generosity of the Telephone people back home. Urffer wrote a letter describing "D" Company's meal. It gives a good idea of the preparations for the celebrations in both Companies:

"Last year our Uncle Samuel handed out turkey, calling it an 'issue.' This year the scrap was over and the boys had nothing to do but sit tight, so this was dispensed with, and the signs of the time all read *pas encore*, meaning 'nix.'

"Our officers and mess sergeant got together and decided the only thing to do was to draw on that Fund which was made up by the folks back home before we left.

"Therefore, from now on my letter must be built on that part of the fund which we used, and while it may not yet be evident, I am trying to convey to you folks the fact that we are as thankful as men can be for your thoughtfulness in providing for a Christmas dinner almost two years in advance.

"With the funds on hand the only remaining trouble was to get the turkeys. Our mess sergeant and M. Thevelin set out in the 'boss's' Dodge. After four long days of chasing to and fro over the landscape they collided with a regiment of healthy turkeys and with the help of the 'circulating medium' taken from the fund, the detail managed to extract a goodly number of turks from their French owners. That is how the turkeys came about.

"The bewildered turks being on hand, provision had to be made for the extras. Uncle Samuel handed us potatoes which were not of the canned type. Beyond the fact that potatoes are necessary in most kitchens, I have no idea how far this helped the works. I know though, that outside of this one item Uncle Sam did not worry about Christmas dinner for the tough old 406th, so we must give all credit to you folks and to Sergeant Pemberton's tact and 'rustling' qualities, for what we had besides potatoes. Hurrahs and yells should be kicked over in the general direction of Bill Daily, George Hoffman and Howard Bolt, who did the cooking. Of course those good natured, affable K. P.'s can horn in for some of the yells.

"We are now ready to move to the mess hall which was a very good ex-wagon shed, ex-Y. M. C. A. warehouse, and is now a mighty fine mess hall. The process of moving the 'Y' people out and the 406th in was so tactfully handled by Sergeant Pemberton that we found ourselves a few smokes to the good, and the mess sergeant was able to buy a lot of candy and smokes kind of 'easy like.'

"The 'chow' call started us on the eats. First on the menu was celery soup. Celery was only a camouflage title for something mighty fine—much better than plain celery soup ever could be.

"From the soup position we advanced in open order on the turkey, of which there was *beaucoup* (French for 'more than enough'). We took all our objectives, namely, turkey, filling, mashed potatoes, dressing and real raisin pie.

"During the above mentioned process we had speeches by the

officers, the first on the list being Captain Meigs, who extended his good wishes and those of the Major, who could not be present. The Captain reminded us of the shocked faces of last year when we were told we were due for another Christmas in France. He said it would be foolish to bet a cock-eyed nickel on a third Christmas over here. He topped his talk with a pair of Perfectos for every one of us. One of these Perfectos is good for a yell from any man and here were two for each one of a hundred men! Draw your own conclusions. It's enough when I say that the rafters shook.

"About this time we were working on the apples, nuts and candy, so Captain Meigs called attention to our faithful ration jugglers, otherwise known to the civilized world as cooks and K. P.'s. The Captain, I am sure, had no inkling of the K. P.'s pre-dinner activities, but anyhow the R. J.'s got a glorious gang of cheers.

"I hope you folks realize that we had a real time and that each and every one of us enjoyed this Christmas. We all know that the main reason for any soldier's enjoying any event is good things to eat, and as we got these things directly through you, we wish to thank you all sincerely and heartily, for out of a rather dreary outlook you enabled us to gather and make a Christmas party which none of us will ever forget."

So successful were the Christmas dinners that both of the Companies decided to have another special spread on New Year's day. There seemed to be no bottom to the box containing the company funds. This time "D" Company made extensive arrangements, and for the occasion procured a whole pig, which was roasted in the oven at the bakery. It was the *piece de resistance* of a most elaborate meal which started with rabbit soup and ended only when each of the diners was stuffed to capacity.

Life at Tonnerre developed into a round of instructions and inspections during the daytime and dances and entertainments at night. Schools had been started in the First Army Corps and studies ranged from improvement in reading and spelling to courses in international law. Attending the classes were more men from the 406th than from all of the other Corps units combined. Cowan and Tomlinson were permanently detailed to the instruction force.

The signal equipment of the Battalion was overhauled and turned in little by little, although Colonel Higgins who was Corps Signal Officer was not anxious to release it. He felt that there might be some further use for the splendid equipment although at the time the 406th was doing almost no signal work. Part of the motor equipment was transferred to divisions. The old three-ton British trucks which had done such faithful service were sent to Dijon for general overhauling because the equipment of the Battalion and Corps motor shops was inadequate to do the work. Lieutenant Hasskarl piloted the trucks to Dijon. While he was negotiating for their repair, an officer asked who had brought "that bunch of junk" into the yards. Hass-

Bird's-eye View of the Show

The Four Prize Winners

Examining Gruninger's Grand Prize Winner

karl's explanation did not satisfy him. He called for a Liberty truck and shoved the faithful old friends one by one off the road into a salvage dump in the field.

By order of General Headquarters, the different Corps in the A. E. F. organized horse and motor shows. Exhibitions were first held in the Divisions and among Corps troops, the winners in these smaller shows to form the entries in the exhibitions for larger units. The 406th still possessed four types of vehicles—cargo trucks, motorcycles, light passenger cars and light delivery cars. The best vehicle in each of these classes received a careful overhauling by the Battalion shop crews. When the preliminaries were held, the four vehicles entered by the 406th were selected to represent the Corps in the respective classes.

Early in February the Corps Commander appointed Colonel Bolles as Chairman of the Committee in charge of the Motor Show for the First Corps. The Colonel called 406th Battalion Headquarters and said that in the committee which he was forming he must have men who could put the show across.

Doyle and Gruninger with the Prize Packard

Of prime importance was the supply officer, who must be a man who could collect anything that was necessary, whether it was available or not and who could in a pinch make a harness from a piece of wire off a bale of hay. The Colonel thought that the only man in the Corps who would measure up to these requirements was, as he called him, "Go-get-her" Meigs. At the time of the Colonel's request, Meigs who had been fighting a very bad cold had submitted to Medical Officer Macfarlan and had gone to bed, but he pulled himself together and for the next few days in the rain and mud, supplies were corralled from all parts of the territory. Arrangements were made, with the help of the Corps Engineer troop and the entire Telegraph Battalion, to care for the quarters and feeding of 700 men and 200 horses at the show. On the evening of the eighth the weather cleared off and became very cold and the temperature remained just below the freezing point.

In the motor section of the show, the four vehicles entered by the 406th —Headquarters' Dodge, Gruninger's Packard truck, Geib's motorcycle and Giles' Ford delivery car—captured the blue ribbons. The Corps Commander, Major-General Wright, paid a high compliment to the motor men of the Battalion when he declared that, had it not been for the 406th the Corps troops would have been "out in the cold."

To cap the climax, when all of the prize winners were lined up on the

Office of the M. T. O.
HEADQUARTERS FIRST ARMY CORPS
American E. F.

February 9, 1919.

FROM: M. T. O.

TO: C. O. 406 Telegraph Battalion.

SUBJECT: Motor Transportation.

1. The Commanding General of the First Army Corps desires that I express to you his appreciation for the showing made by the motor transportation of the 406 Telegraph Battalion at the Horse and transportation show, 1st Army Corps, Tonnerre, February 8, 1919.

2. He is not only delighted with the actual show condition of your vehicles and of the fact that with four entries you took four first prizes, but with the fact that the condition of your vehicles shows clearly that all of the motor transportation assigned to your unit is kept in the best possible condition at all times.

3. It would have been impossible to have made the showing that you did unless the greatest care had been taken at all times to keep your transportation in the best of condition, and he desires that you express to the drivers concerned his personal gratification for the efforts and the showing which they have made.

G. P. STRELINGER
Major, M. T. C.

A/S

field for awarding the Grand Prize, interest centered on the 1½-ton truck driven by Gruninger, and the committee of judges agreed that this truck, which had been assembled by Gruninger at St. Nazaire and driven by him 21,000 miles through all of the campaigns with the First Corps, was the best entry in the show. There were, however, certain lovers of horses among the judges who could not persuade themselves to award to a motor truck the Grand Prize at a show in which horses were involved. Gruninger was given the Grand Prize in the motor section of the show for his entry. General Wright was not satisfied to express his feelings orally. He directed the Corps Motor Transport Officer to send the Battalion a letter of congratulation.

CHAPTER XXVI

Homeward Bound

WHILE the Battalion was still celebrating its success in the First Corps show, new cause for rejoicing arose. Orders came transferring the 406th to the Fifth Corps. The pleasant part of it was that the Fifth Corps was preparing for immediate return to the United States. The Headquarters of the Fifth Corps were then at Nougent-en-Baussigny, but the 406th was to remain at Tonnerre, some 90 kilometers to the west until the movement toward the port should start. With the transfer orders came a complimentary order of appreciation from the Commander of the First Army Corps.

When the first intimation was received that there was possibility of the Battalion's returning to the United States in the near future, a careful review of all the records was started. During the month of February Adjutant Green, with Magill and McIlhenny and the clerical forces of the Companies were kept busy revising and reviewing passenger lists, cantonment lists and records. Just in the midst of the work Green was taken from the Battalion and ordered to the replacement depot at Gondrecourt and Lieutenant Wright was transferred from "D" Company to take up the duties of Adjutant. Lieutenant Pearson disposed of all ordnance and signal equipment.

Orders for the disposition of the motor equipment were difficult to obtain. The First Corps was anxious to retain under its control the four Blue Ribbon

winners, so they could be placed in the 1st Army Motor show with the First Corps entries. Approval for this procedure was eventually secured from General Headquarters.

In the meantime, orders had been issued by the Fifth Corps that, when the westward movement started, the 406th would proceed by motor transport. The departure from Tonnerre was scheduled for March sixth. To prevent any conflict of dates the prize-winning motors were entered in the Army show at Bar-sur-Aube on the fifth. At this show the Ford delivery car, because it had had very little use, was not allowed to compete, but the Dodge car, Geib's motorcycle and Gruninger's truck took the blue ribbons in their classes and in addition Gruninger again walked away with the Grand Prize.

The long awaited movement toward the port started on the scheduled day, and at noon the trucks reached Auxerre. By evening the train had successfully covered the first lap of the journey over the splendid gravel roads and collected at Gien, a picturesque old town on the River Loire. Many French units were being demobilized in the town and consequently all available billets were occupied by French soldiers. It was due only to the kindness and interest of the French artillery officers that the 406th was able to obtain quarters.

Gien was the home of Edouard Thevelin and after mess several of the men set out to find their old friend. Edouard had contracted a severe case of grippe and was at his home slowly recovering. He was overjoyed to be greeted by his former comrades. The next morning most of the men found opportunity to visit him while the trucks were being supplied with fuel. He was living with his aged father, a musician, and this gentleman with his long white hair and gracious manner was an interesting character. As the men left to return

Gruninger's Grand Prize Winner Geib's Motorcycle Headquarters' Dodge

THREE PRIZE WINNERS AT THE TOURS SHOW

to their trucks, the good French friends stood in their little front yard waving their hands and calling "Vive l'Amerique!"

The trucks were halted in Orleans at noon and after mess the men had an opportunity to look around the old city before continuing to Vendome. This was the end of the day's journey and was reached early in the afternoon, but there were no particularly attractive places available to billet a battalion. A regiment of American cavalry occupied the French barracks and the Signal men were directed to a large airdrome on the outskirts of the town. When the trucks had been parked, all of the men except a small guard were dismissed until the next morning and most of them sought quarters for the night in the town.

Before the Battalion departed from Tonnerre Captain Hasskarl, who had recently been promoted and put in command of Company "E," was assigned to the Fifth Corps billeting detail. The Battalion passed through Le Mans on Saturday afternoon, Harris having been posted there to guide the

Gien

Courcelles

column to Courcelles, the town which Hasskarl had selected for the 406th. Courcelles had seen few Americans and the Signal men were welcomed with enthusiasm. Inspection officers arrived from Le Mans and the Battalion with all its property was formed in the park of the small chateau in which Headquarters had been established. The officers and noncoms had labored earnestly to have this an orderly inspection. Every article was in its proper place in front of each man. The inspecting officers glanced over the assembly and remarked that this was the most orderly and the most nearly complete inspection that they had made of all the troops which had passed through Le Mans. The following day the Battalion records were inspected by officials from the area Headquarters, and again a 100 per cent score resulted. Not a single change was ordered in the passenger lists, cantonment lists and soldiers' records.

The last equipment to be turned over were the trucks, and these were delivered to Le Mans the day before the Battalion left Courcelles. The officers at the motor center were so pleased with the condition of the trucks—these being the first vehicles turned in to the depot in usable condition—that they gladly agreed to furnish chauffeurs so that three trucks could be retained at Courcelles to haul the luggage to the train. The Grand Prize winner was one of the three.

Final adjustment of charges for damage to billets used by the Battalion was completed and on the morning of March 23rd, the 406th marched up the road toward La Suze, swinging along light-heartedly and appreciative of the fact that the accommodating officials at Le Mans had allowed the use of trucks for hauling the packs to the train. As they were marching along the road they came upon Gruninger's pet—the prize truck. Where the road approached a sharp curve the new chauffeur had lost control and the truck landed in a ditch. It had been with the Battalion from the very start of its labors in France. It had seen them through all of their campaigns. To bid it farewell thus was not conducive of light hearts, especially among the motor men.

At La Suze a long train made up of American army box cars for the soldiers and a few French and German third-class coaches for the officers was waiting. This was the first time that the 406th as an organization traveled in box cars, although most of the soldiers in France at one time or another experienced the comforts of the "Hommes 40 Chevaux 8." Rumor had it that the trip from La Suze to Brest might take as long as thirty hours. This train cut the time in half. It left La Suze at four in the afternoon, sped along steadily through driving rain and reached Brest at seven the following morning.

Upon arriving, the organization was treated to its first example of the systematic management of the port of Brest. The men were directed to a large kitchen where in less than a half hour all of the Fifth Corps troops were

At Brest

fed. And it was a good feed too. Immediately thereafter they swung along on their way up the hill and over the muddy road toward Camp Pontanazen. Colonel Voris was waiting in Brest to return to the States. He learned that his Battalion had arrived and he lost no time in visiting the camp.

This time Captain Hasskarl's efforts to obtain quarters in advance were of no avail. No billets were assigned to troops until they actually arrived at the camp. The system was well organized however, and before long the men were given barracks. The report was general that it was the aim of the authorities to have each organization on shipboard not later than four days after it arrived in camp. Major Griest with Magill who was again acting as Adjutant, reported to Headquarters. Reams of instructions were handed to the Major and an officers' conference was held to go over the instructions and see just what work was to be done before final inspection could be asked. Tuesday evening two new lieutenants arrived—"Bill" Brittain, who was assigned to his old Company, and Sonner who was appointed Adjutant.

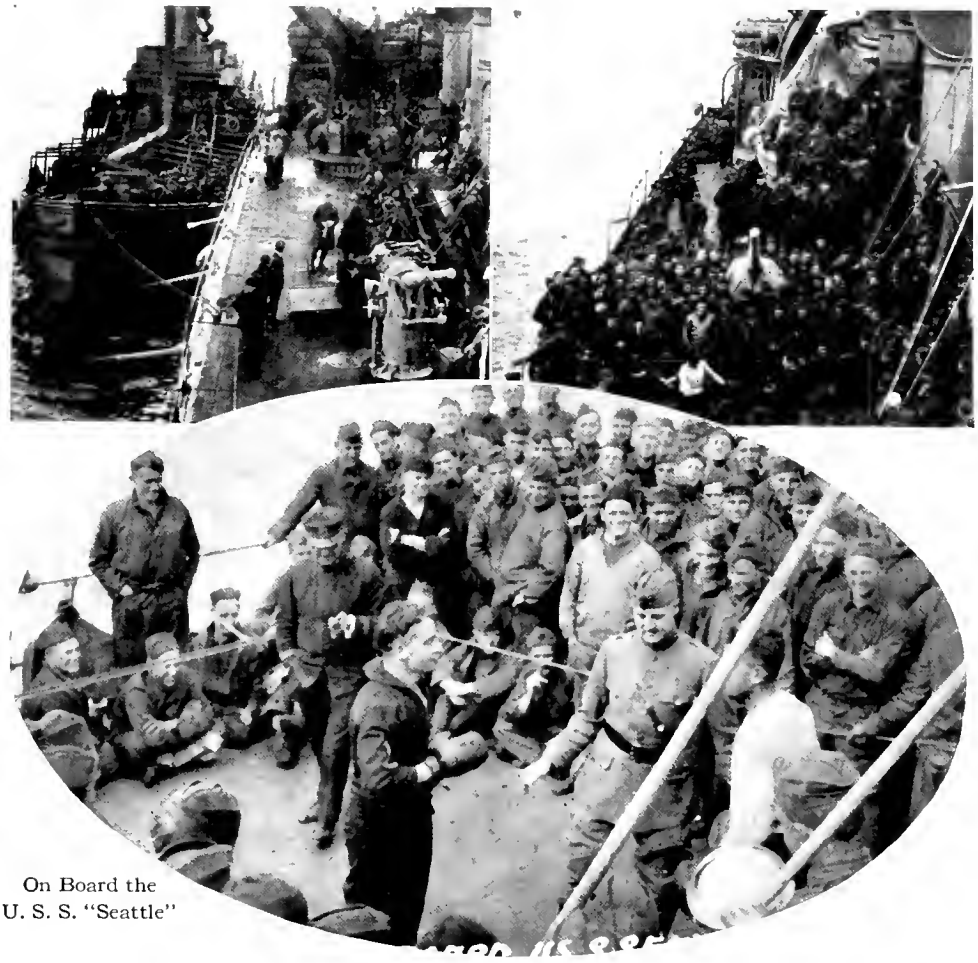
At the camp everybody was rushed. Every outfit in the camp was required to furnish large details, some more than half of their men, to carry on the camp work. The huge machinery worked with fascinating precision. Late on the

twenty-seventh, orders were received that the final inspection would be held the next morning. Every one was astir at daylight and two trial inspections were held in the barracks. Then the organization reported at the hall and laid out its equipment which was in perfect condition. The speed and snap with which the men displayed their equipment won for them distinction, the inspection officer noting on his report. "Grade—extra excellent—no shortages." The last two words were underscored. The pack inspection was scheduled for the same afternoon and as soon as the men returned to their quarters from the morning inspection, final instructions were given on the make-up of the pack. Again a trial inspection was held before reporting at the hall and this time as the men of the 406th filed by, the inspecting officer put on his report: "Excellent plus," and he underscored the "Excellent" a half dozen times.

All of the records and passenger lists had been approved, inspections were over, but there were no ships! This was a small organization and could probably be tucked in to fill a boat at almost any time, but all of the boats available had been used in an endeavor to make a record shipment for the month of March and to entirely clear the 26th Division, whose units had begun arriving in camp the day before the 406th appeared.

Delousing Machines

During this wait the Major received disquieting news from his home and after thinking the matter over for some time, he explained the situation to Colonel Milliken who was now Signal Officer at Brest. The Battalion was ready to sail but a ship would not be available for several days. Colonel Milliken reported these facts to the Chief Signal Officer at Tours who ordered Griest released for immediate embarkation on the "Augusta Victoria."



On Board the
U. S. S. "Seattle"

Captain Meigs assumed command of the Battalion on the fifth of April. Ever since the arrival at Brest he had been haranguing the men on the necessity of being absolutely "louse free." Each day he told them that if they had any suspicion of cooties in their equipment they should go to the delousing outfit and go through the "mill." He called up before each man the horror of being held in France when the rest of the Battalion sailed if at the last minute even a

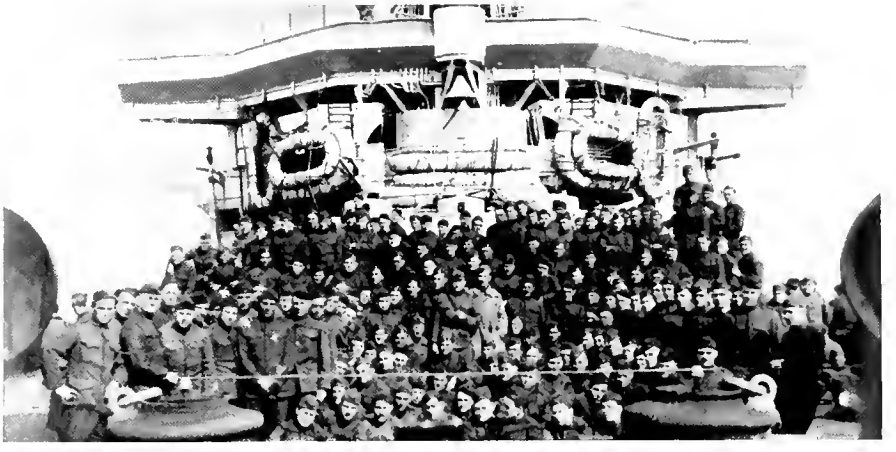
single cootie should be discovered. As a result practically every man had been deloused a half dozen or more times.

Meigs had a beautiful new uniform. Shining buttons, shoulder bars, spurs, fancy belt, 'n everything! He was proud of it. The whole Battalion was proud of it. But horrible to relate, a cootie was discovered on the new outfit. It is said that this was the only cootie actually seen in the entire Battalion while it was in Brest. The men had gone through the delousing process for "safety first" reasons. Now Meigs and his wonderful outfit had to be deloused. When the uniform came back it was a sight to behold. Out of shape, shrunken, wrinkled, tarnished—nothing could have done it more damage, unless the Boche had gotten hold of it while they were retreating out of the Argonne. Meigs was short of funds because of his investment in the uniform. So he had to wear it as it was. "The coat tail was in the middle of my back, the sleeves were up to my elbows, the coat was tight across my chest, the breeches would have split if I had leaned over—the Government owes me a darn good uniform," was his comment. Luckily he carried a "spare" which he kept locked up for use upon his arrival in the States.

On the evening of the seventh, the good news arrived that the Battalion would embark on the "Seattle" early the following morning. Lieutenant Schmidt with a large detail was dispatched to load the remaining Fifth Corps baggage. The men who had been on various duties around the camp were recalled and preparations made for the departure.

On the morning of the eighth the Battalion continued its record of "firsts" when it was the first to turn in all of its surplus material to Camp Headquarters, the first organization to leave camp, and the first to board the ship.

Hardtack presented a problem. Mascots were not allowed on the transports. But Captain Meigs slipped the dog underneath his coat and with some help from one of the sailors on the "Seattle" he got the animal aboard. Once



On the "Seattle"

on the ship Hardtack was sure of his passage home. The transport pulled out of the harbor at noon on the eighth and the headlands which shut off Brest gradually melted into the eastern horizon.

The trip homeward was filled with a variety of duties such as guard, mess and police. On the second day out there was a call for eighty volunteer stokers, the idea being that with additional stokers greater speed could be made. Of the first eighty to volunteer, sixty were from the 406th. During the trip a hundred and twenty-five of the Signal men assisted in firing the boilers.

On the "Seattle" another expert was discovered in the Battalion. Pemberton had served a term in the Navy. On the "Seattle" he met an old friend in the Chief Engineer of the vessel. A generator had been out of service for three or four months and Pemberton set to work to make repairs. His success at this job won for him a comfortable room in the quarters of the Chief Engineer and his reputation for versatility was maintained to the last.

The voyage continued with its details and inspections, interspersed with moving pictures and athletic contests. In the latter, Ford became boxing champion of the ship, defeating not only the best among the troops but the pick of the Navy personnel as well.

Chapter XXVII

From Khaki to "Civies"

RELIGIOUS service aboard the "Seattle" had just been completed on Easter morning when the boat entered New York harbor and the buildings of Manhattan became visible. The westward bound home seekers, who had left New York—then "an Atlantic Port"—twenty months before, hung eagerly over the rail straining their eyes for familiar sights. It is needless to discuss the thoughts in their minds as they sailed up the harbor past the famous lady on Bedloe's Island. The vessel neared the pier in Hoboken and familiar faces were seen on the dock, among them Colonel Hubbell who was now out of uniform.

As the men landed, the Red Cross treated them to mess while Captain Meigs set out to locate somebody in authority. Easter apparently was a military holiday and there were no officers at the pier. Meigs managed to learn that the Battalion was scheduled for Camp Upton. Spying a ferryboat which was approaching the pier, he connived with its Captain to carry the Battalion to Long Island.

At Long Island City, the boat was met by an officer who was awaiting the arrival of the 406th "Labor" Battalion. During active service in France, the men frequently contended that "Telegraph" Battalion was a misnomer and that "Labor" Battalion was a far more appropriate name. So the officer was not so far from the truth. Once more there were Red Cross representatives present to distribute chocolate and other delicacies while the Army

representatives directed the men to waiting trains with the information that a hot meal would be furnished them upon their arrival at Camp Upton.

It was almost midnight when the Battalion arrived at the barracks which had been assigned to the organization. Here there was a pile of uncooked

On the Pier

rations which had been dumped on the floor but there was no stove, no fire, no cook. The men had had no substantial food since the forenoon and the Battalion cooks went to work to prepare a meal. Meanwhile an artillery organization which by some error had been assigned to the same quarters arrived. The attack was repulsed. But when the food was ready the artillery men were invited to help dispose of it.

The next day saw a round of inspections and the men were reequipped. Cantonment lists and other Battalion records were checked and rechecked by Magill and his Headquarters detachment and the clerical forces of the Companies. After three days the journey to Camp Dix began. Captain Meigs used his powers of persuasion to secure special cars for the organization as regular trains required several transfers en route.

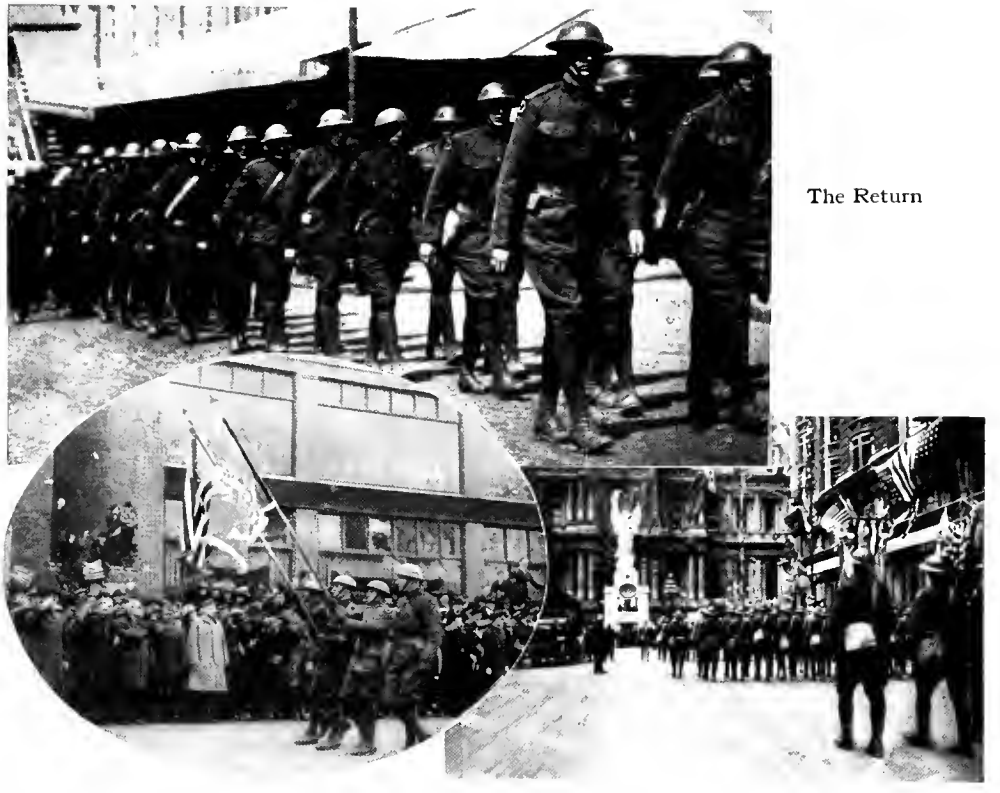
Another long round of inspections was started at Camp Dix on the twenty-fourth. All of the records were turned in to Camp Headquarters and the officers and soldiers became casuals. Again the careful work of the Battalion's clerical staff was apparent when the Major in charge of the demobiliza-

tion declared that this was the best set of records turned in by any organization which had passed through that center.

Captain Meigs had been expending his energy in trying to keep the demobilization wheels turning and the men properly cared for. The Captain worked himself to such a point of exhaustion that he became ill and his condition was so serious that Captain Macfarlan, in consultation with the camp physicians, ordered him to the hospital for an operation. Meigs submitted to the decree, disappointed at the thought that he would not be able to accompany the Battalion during its two or three remaining days of service.

A reception in Philadelphia was scheduled for the twenty-fifth. From the time the Battalion left Courcelles there had been little opportunity for drill. Three of the officers, Schmidt, Pearson and Sonner, had been detained for discharge at Camp Upton. It fell upon Captain Hasskarl to take the Battalion to Philadelphia and throughout the morning he with Macfarlan and Brittain conducted a vigorous drill at the camp so that the men would be ready for the afternoon exercises.

Special trains and trolleys delivered the organization at Broad and South Streets, Philadelphia. The men were formed and marched around City Hall



The Return

THE REVIEW AT BELL PARKWAY BUILDING

and out the Parkway to the Bell Telephone building—Hardtack proudly accompanying the column as one of its distinguished members. The sidewalks were lined with relatives and friends who cheered the seasoned veterans as they swung along in true military style.

The Battalion passed in review before a party in which were General Saltzman representing the Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Mr. Bethell then President, and Mr. Kinnard then Vice-President and General Manager of the Telephone Company, and formed in line before the Bell building. The day had been cloudy and when the formal review was completed the snow was driving down the street in a gale. The standards and guidons which had been carried through the entire service in France were returned at this formation. The color guard advanced and as the men stood at salute the band played the National Anthem. At the first note word was flashed through the operating rooms in the Bell Parkway Building and the operators rose from their chairs and remained standing until the last notes had died out. When the music ceased, Captain Hasskarl taking the standards from the color guard, returned them one by one to Mr. Kinnard. Accepting them Mr. Kinnard spoke:

> "Men of the 406th, our own Battalion:
>
> "It is a high honor you confer by placing in our keeping your guidons, your standard, your flag.
>
> "What was mere equipment when you received it has been made sacred by association with you in a glorious service.
>
> "Your fidelity and the excellence of your accomplishments have more than justified our confidence and realized for us our most ambitious hopes.
>
> "These symbols of your now famous organization will be cherished, reverenced and displayed, so that we may be not unmindful of the great unselfishness of you and your fellows, that the world might be purged of the fearful things that threatened civilization.
>
> "You bring to us high honor. We accept the custody of your battle flags and give you assurance of our respect, our pride, our gratitude, our affection."

The section of the Parkway between 16th and 17th Streets was roped off during the ceremony and now the police lowered the ropes that hemmed in the crowd on the pavements and the soldiers simultaneously broke ranks. Then what a happy bedlam! The soldier boys scattered pell-mell across the Parkway—for each had picked from the corner of his eye the place where his dear ones were standing. And they, not content to wait, rushed forward. The flurry of snowflakes driven furiously downward fell upon the reunited groups, but the unbounded joy of greeting proved the futility of the elements' attempt to dampen spirits.

Some girls were not quite sure at first that they were kissing the right soldier and some of the boys admitted that they kissed the wrong girl. A

Returning the Standards and Guidons

mother hugged somebody else's son—but, well, she shifted into her own son's arms so quickly that she scarcely knew the difference. Tears streamed down faces that were at the same time wrinkled with smiles. A soldier's father burst into tears when he saw his boy. Returning fathers clasped wife and baby in one fond embrace—a baby perhaps that they had never seen before. One daddy's little girl didn't know her father, but she soon found out who he was. Sergeant Coates' daughter will always know him now, and she'll be mighty proud of him, too.

All too soon assembly sounded on the bugles and in a few moments the 406th was marching toward Scottish Rite Hall on North Broad Street, followed by admiring relatives and friends. Before the hall they broke ranks

and joined home folks once again and for almost an hour chatted and embraced and tried to make up for the months gone by.

At five o'clock the crowd moved to the banquet room. A number of large place cards told everyone where to sit if they chose to be with the most of their friends. "Jim" Repplier, Chairman of the General Committee for arranging affairs, with a few brief remarks turned the ceremony over to Mr. Kinnard who called upon the Rev. Dr. William M. Auld to deliver the invocation. Mr. Kinnard next called the assembly to its feet and proposed a toast to Private Hollowell and Major Glaspey, who gave their lives to their country over there. He said: "Borrowing the words of the Persian astronomer-poet:

> " 'And when, like her, O Saki, you shall pass
> Among the guests star-scattered on the grass,
> And in your joyous errand reach the spot
> Where I made one, turn down an empty glass.'
>
> "Private John J. Hollowell, killed in the discharge of his duties near Neufchateau, February 11, 1918.
>
> "Major Rexford Mason Glaspey, died of pneumonia on November 5, 1918, at Base Hospital 51.
>
> "God grant that when taps are blown for us we may have merited in part the great respect their supreme sacrifice commands."

Mr. Kinnard, with a dramatic gesture, brought an empty glass downward on the table; the crash resounded throughout the hall. The banqueters stood for a moment in silence and then, all as one, resumed their seats.

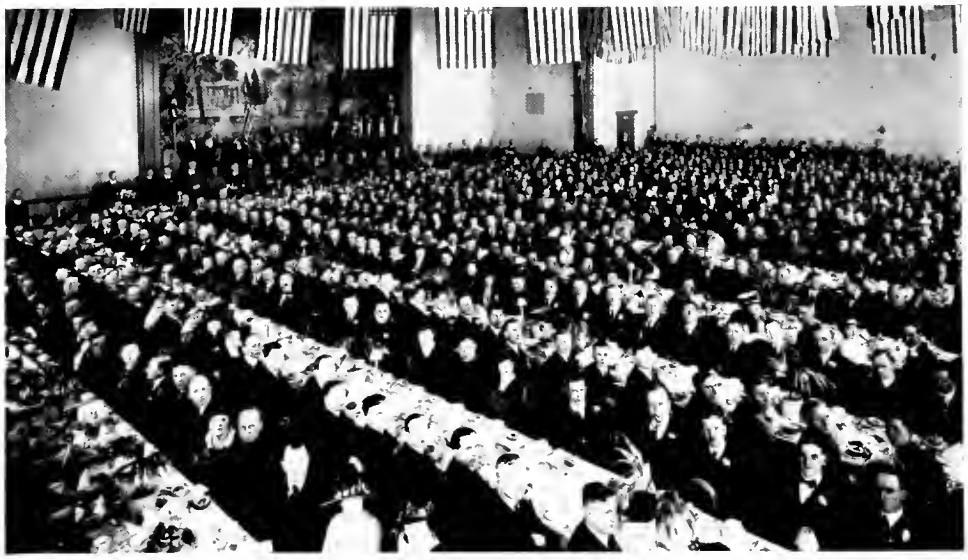
They fell to their "chow," and an occasional song either by professional singers or better still, by the revelers themselves, added a zest to the exceptionally fine food that the committee had provided.

Speeches were now in order. Mr. Kinnard as toastmaster, first introduced President F. H. Bethell who, imbued with the spirit of the occasion, said that he had no voice to express his gratitude at being able to attend the dinner. And he assured the boys—every bloomin' one—that their jobs were all dusted off and waiting for them just as soon as they finished celebrating and wanted to return. The response to this announcement was deafening.

General Saltzman, Executive Officer to General Squier and representing him at the dinner, spoke next and said among other things: "Records show that your Battalion had more active service than any other similar battalion in France. It is also a matter of record that General Foch remarked he would rather ride five miles to an American telephone than use a French one."

So that every one might see them, the three men who were first cited for bravery—Gallo, Grindel and McKay—were asked by Colonel Hubbell, who next addressed the gathering, to stand up. Major Griest succeeded him on the floor and then Captain Hasskarl who, too hoarse to speak smiled an

affable smile that spoke worlds of things. Captain Macfarlan was next and he took back to camp a hearty testimony to Captain Meigs—for everybody was sorry that the Battalion's popular Commander was indisposed. Captain Macfarlan assured the gathering that he was not seriously ill however, and that he felt worse about not being able to come to the dinner than about being ill.



The Philadelphia Party

Colonel Voris was invited but could not attend. The men of the Battalion had a deep feeling for the "Old Man," and appreciated the sentiment which he expressed in the following letter to Mr. Kinnard:

> "I deeply regret that I did not receive your kind invitation to attend the reception given by the employees of your Company to the 406th Telegraph Battalion in time to thank you and write you in praise of the Battalion, for it was impossible for me to attend and sing their achievements in person.
>
> "I fear the deeds of the Battalion went unpraised, and I regret it. They served in the First Army Corps from February to November last year through the three big engagements participated in by the American Expeditionary Forces in France, and I know the difficulties under which they worked, and I know the willingness, the intelligence and the efficiency displayed by each and every member of that organization.
>
> "The several Bell Companies furnished a number of Telegraph Battalions, and every one of them 'delivered the goods' in every way, but none of the other Battalions had the opportunities of the 406th in varied service, such as heavy commercial construction and maintenance in the back areas, and later the 'rough and ready' construc-

Major James W. Hubbell
(later Lieutenant-Colonel)

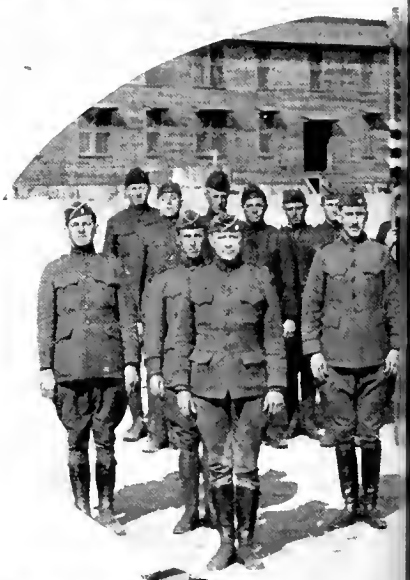
Major William P. Wattles

Major Thomas H. Griest

Captain Fielding P. Meigs

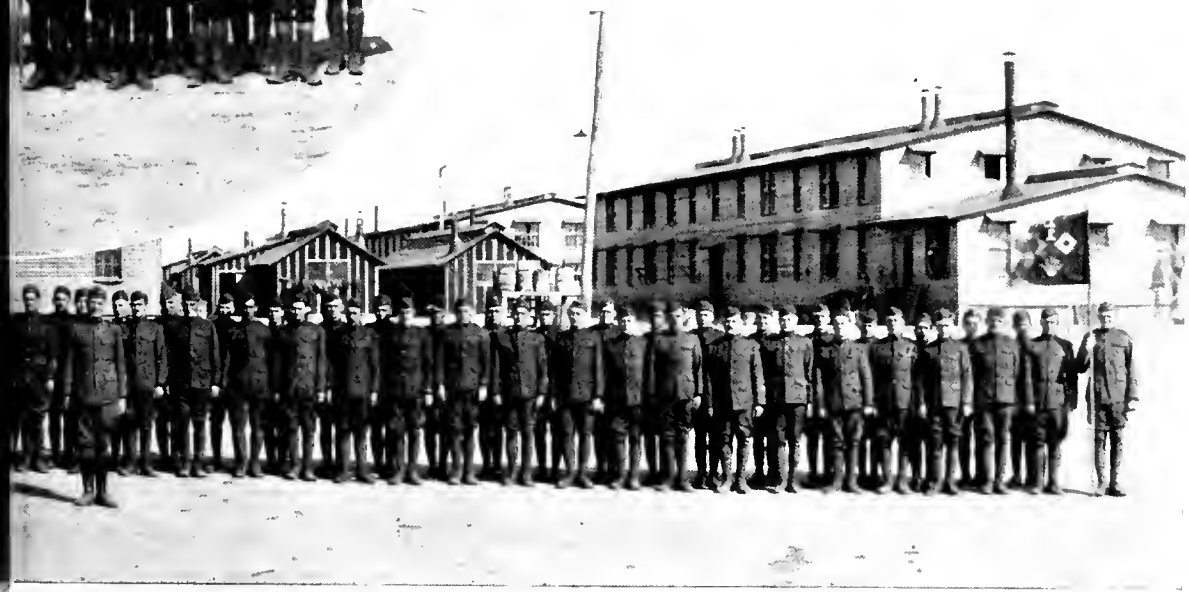
THE COMMANDERS OF THE BATTALION

Company "E"



Company "D"

Officers and Headquarters Detachment



UPTON

ROSTER

406th TELEGRAPH BATTALION—SIGNAL CORPS, U. S. A.

April 20, 1919

CAPTAIN FIELDING P. MEIGS, Commanding

HEADQUARTERS

1st Lieut. Edwin P. Sinner, Adjutant

Sergeant, 1st Class, Robert W. Magill
Sergeant Percy R. Furman
Sergeant E. V. McIlhenny
Chauffeur, 1st Class, Henry W. Taylor
Cook Albert L. Custer
Private Merritt W. DeVoe
Private Charles A. Slocum

SUPPLY

1st Lieut. John M. Pearson, Supply Officer

Sergeant, 1st Class, Jerome M. Hamilton
Corporal George B. Howell
Chauffeur, 1st Class, Charles E. Althouse
Chauffeur Benjamin S. Thorp, Jr.
Private, 1st Class, Arthur A. Bennett
Private, 1st Class, Alonzo M. Fuller

MEDICAL

Capt. Douglas Macfarlan, Medical Officer

Sergeant, 1st Class, John A. Brown
Private, 1st Class, John Boyd
Private, 1st Class, Bert W. Geddard
Private, 1st Class, John Lister
Private Jess L. Dilley
Private Alfred W. Teufel

COMPANY "D"

1st Lieut. William W. Brittain

MASTER SIGNAL ELECTRICIANS

Henry B. Cowan
Calvin E. Miller

SERGEANTS—FIRST CLASS

Martin H. Buehler, 2nd
Harry Jensen
Robert L. Leffler
George D. Woodward
Albert Coates
Walter W. Ryno
Albert S. Spears
Harry C. Vick

SERGEANTS

George A. Donbaugh
Edward T. Hannam
Paul R. Knight
John Miller
Ray C. Tittle
Harry W. Favinger
William Heisler
William E. Long
Walter L. Pemberton
John E. Twohig

CORPORALS

Harry O. Carlson
Robert Craigmile
Jefferson Davis
James M. Forwood
Walter B. Haslop
William J. Kelly
John F. Noone
Frederick H. Stevens
Leo F. Confoy
William J. B. Daniels
Harry F. Devlin
Duncan J. Grant
Hubert Harris
Myrl K. Miller
Horace B. Welk

CHAUFFEURS—FIRST CLASS

Richard Doyle
John Grumnger, Jr.
John V. Engstrom

CHAUFFEURS

John D. Armstrong
William Dobbne
John H. Graham, Jr.
Irving S. Kreider
Semon H. Whitlock
John J. Conway
Chauncey B. Fullerton
Frank F. Huss
William Smith

HORSESHOER

William Robinson

COOKS

Howard C. Bolt
Willard W. Darley

PRIVATES

Wendell F. Adams
James Albert
Samuel J. Bigham
Patrick F. Canavan
James F. Cannon, Jr.
George F. Connell
John A. Hall
Ernest Heyman
Herbert W. Jones
Christopher Kilen
John McC. Koser
Joseph T. Lord
John G. McFarland
Fred J. Maurada
Allan M. Peterson
William C. Summers
Edmond J. Spettel
Gino D. Tomaso
John Walker
Charles H. Whipple
Charles E. Alber
Albert Banholzer
William G. Callahan
Olan R. Dennis
John J. Ford
Arno E. Herzer
George W. Hoffman
John C. H. Kiehl
Edward H. Kissenger
William J. Lester, Jr.
John E. Lyons
Harold G. Marr
William J. Oyler
Donald M. Shute
Harry L. Spangler
William J. Tenneson
Thomas Tomlinson
Leopold C. Walkup
Charles S. Worrell

COMPANY "E"

Capt. Victor L. C. Hasskarl
1st Lieut. Benjamin Schmidt

MASTER SIGNAL ELECTRICIANS

Walter J. Gretzler
Dolph T. McKay

SERGEANTS—FIRST CLASS

Leon O. Bailey
Charles W. Danley
Carl Huckelberry
Clarence M. Hutchinson
Herman A. Bohn
David McC. Hackett, 2nd
John D. McAnallen
Edward H. Mumford

SERGEANTS

Edward J. Cavanagh
Jesse A. Gaghagen
Hiram V. Lindley
Frederick Maloney
Frank B. Westfall
Wallie Davis
John F. Klingensmith
John B. Lynch
Clarence B. Vance

CORPORALS

George A. Beck
Clifford H. Drew
Ephraim McC. Eshard
William T. Grimm
Harry A. Lowstetter
Timothy J. Manix
Ernest Richards
Roy Seybert
William J. Beck
John A. Dwyer
Tony Gallo
Henry C. Lander
Ollie H. McKinney
Myles M. Morcom
Clyde L. Russell

CHAUFFEURS—FIRST CLASS

Joseph C. Gaus
Ralph E. Mance
Leif H. Hallgren
Glen Sebring

CHAUFFEURS

Joseph E. Burns
Howard E. Giles
Ford Lobaugh
Ralph C. Rauenswinder
Leo F. Shaffer
Willard F. Geib
Howard F. Henk
Alfred E. McCann
Chauncey McCann
Fred J. Schmitt

HORSESHOER

William Robinson

COOKS

William C. Geddling
John A. Johnson

PRIVATES

William J. Adams
Carl W. Bielstein
James H. Blaisdell
Patrick J. Callahan
George A. Farda
Charles J. Green
George E. Guenther
Paul A. J. Henry
Frank M. Hull
Jacob Kline
Archie L. Lewis
Raymond J. McDonald
Almon D. McKay
Edward P. Mohr
Edwin L. Petersen
Raymond N. Poole
Francis C. Riley
Matthew R. Robinson
Charles Seymour
John Shinfessel
Reason O. Swearingen
Miller Williams
Clarence E. Yeckel
Raphael C. Barto
Earl Bissett
William J. Bogner
Richard J. Curley
August J. Fest
Joseph J. Grondel
Leland F. Guiles
Thomas E. Hoover
Harold M. King
Charles L. Leasure
Earl A. Logsdon
John J. McDonell
John L. McKinney
Emmett E. Moss
William C. Pfefferle
George D. Reid
Vincent P. Roach
John D. Ross
Alvin C. Sherrill
William T. Smith
Leslie E. Thompson
Michael F. Tormey
Bernard H. Wrede

> tion and operation of field lines under fire near the firing line. I was acquainted with several of these battalions and their work, and it is difficult to see how we could have gotten along without them; but I know it would have been impossible to have gotten along without the Battalion so generously furnished and subsidized by The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. This is the general feeling of the Staff Officers of the First Army Corps, American Expeditionary Forces."

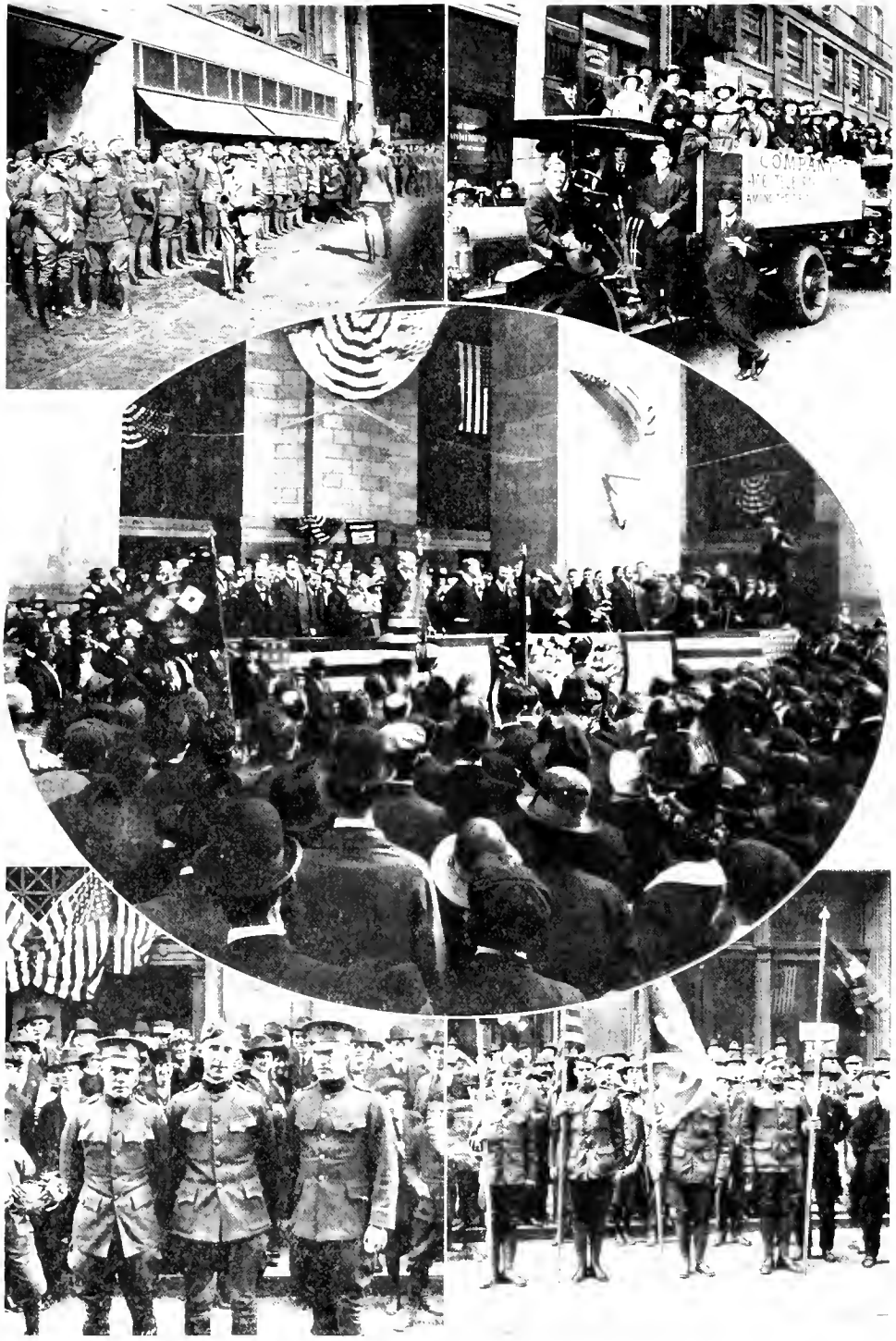
Out on the banquet floor sat Chauffeur Gruninger (the best chauffeur in the army, 'tis said), and Mr. Kinnard asked him to say a few words. Then Corporal Drew of Company "E," Sergeant Buehler of Company "D," and Lieutenants Price and Dickson were called on. Sergeant Urffer told how the war made him perfectly at home with the boys—but well, he'd have to get used to his old American ways again. He expressed the sentiment of every one in the crowd whose hands and ways were a trifle hardened by vigorous campaigning. Lieutenant Murdaugh arrived at the dinner quite late. He sailed after the Battalion had left and reached America but a few hours before the big party was scheduled. He got there just the same, to the great delight of his "bunkies," for they had not seen him since he won his bars.

"I'm damn glad to be here," said Lieutenant Brittain when it was his turn to speak, "and I hope you'll pardon my French, for I learned it over there." He proposed three cheers for Mr. Kinnard that were given with a hearty gusto, and the speaking ended with a few words from Sergeant Major Magill.

The Battalion was scheduled to return to Camp Dix on the nine o'clock train, so the meeting necessarily broke up all too soon. Happy at the reunion and happy at the sincerity of Mr. Kinnard's parting words—"Just as soon as you're through jollifying, come back to us"—the boys bade their folks farewell. They formed in line outside Scottish Rite Hall and went to their bunks in the Camp Dix barracks, every tongue praising the affair that was tendered them.

The next day, April 26th, the 406th Telegraph Battalion was mustered out and ceased to exist as a military organization. On that day it passed into history. It was almost to the day, two years after the men had been sworn in.

There was a party for Company "E" in Pittsburgh a week later—May third. About ten o'clock in the morning a crowd began to gather in the lobby of the Grant Building, attracted by the Welcome Home signs and the presence of Hardtack, the mascot who was in charge of his bodyguard, Chauffeur L. H. Hallgrén. Hardtack sniffed disdainfully at the bevy of admiring young women surrounding him, but when one most thoughtful friend, remembering the common failing of man and beast, produced various kinds of dog dainties, he very willingly unbent and speedily demolished the proffered food. This was only the beginning of a memorable day for Company "E's" mascot, who bore all the honors heaped upon him with characteristic soldier calm.



THE HOMECOMING OF COMPANY "E"

Captain Victor L. C. Hasskarl

A parade was scheduled for 4 P. M. but long before that hour the clans began to gather. Members of Company "E" from out of town points brought their relatives and friends who helped to swell the crowd. Parade Chairman "Charlie" Lehmann had made complete arrangements with the "weather man" for good weather; and to prove that he was no slacker Old Sol was out in all his glory, smiling broadly upon the throng. At about 3:30, Top Sergeant Hackett blew his whistle for the line-up. From the lack of speed with which the boys came to attention it seemed that at the moment they were more interested in hearing what "she" was saying, or relating some hair-raising experience to some buddy who stayed at home, than in getting ready for the parade. After the usual preparatory hustle and bustle the parade was formed and it moved out promptly at the hour set.

Though wearing their red chevrons denoting discharge from the service of Uncle Sam, the boys had lost none of their soldierly bearing and the crowds along the route of the parade were unsparing in their admiration and applause. Behind the overseas veterans came two trucks filled with girls of the Telephone Company and friends of Company "E." The trucks were emblazoned with placards giving the record of Company "E's" achievements overseas, the second one carrying Hardtack who took the cheers and the noise with the composure of a veteran. Following the trucks came the male employees of the Company. There were floats of the Liberty Loan Committee two of which bore machine guns which kept up a continual rat-tat-tat. The route was over the principal streets of the city through packed lanes of humanity. The reviewing stand at the City-County Building was the terminus of the parade. Here Mayor Babcock spoke to the men, welcoming them in the name of the City of Pittsburgh:

> "Pittsburgh is proud of its boys who served in the World War. There is nothing too good for them and we of this great city are waiting for them with open arms. I congratulate you on the wonderful record you made in France, for in honoring yourselves by your service in France, you also honored the city which sent you. I also wish to

congratulate the great corporation which was instrumental in your organization and which, as your employer, has watched over you during your travels overseas, and now seeks to make your home-coming an event which will live long in your memories.

"Coming over here, I was talking with one of your officials who had journeyed all the way from Philadelphia to be present at this celebration, and I asked him how it happened that he was here. His reply was conclusive: 'I had to come. I simply could not remain at home when a reception like this was being given our boys in Pittsburgh; my place was here.' This answer is an indication of the love for you which is in the hearts of your countrymen. We are all mighty glad to have you back safe and sound. God bless you all!"

At seven o'clock the assemblage moved to the banquet hall. All the civilians were seated at the tables when the boys marched in to the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." They lined up in front of the speaker's table, stood at attention while "the Star-Spangled Banner" was played and after a few words of welcome spoken by J. K. Martin, General Chairman of the Committee, they broke ranks and threaded through the aisles to find the places reserved for them among their own particular friends.

The blessing was asked by Mr. Lehmann. Then the "mess signal" was

The Harrisburg Dinner

blown by Bugler Fest after which all "fell to" and did justice to the viands which had been provided. During the dinner, a "jazz band," a male sextet, and other entertainers made the hall ring with music and merriment. All the popular songs, new and old, were sung even to Mr. Badger's favorite "Bashful Emma."

After the "eats," Mr. Badger who had been known throughout the Pittsburgh Division as "the Daddy of Company 'E'," was asked to act as toastmaster.

He called on Mr. Kinnard, who explained that this was the first real opportunity he had found to talk to the boys; on the Parkway the wind had made short work of any efforts to make a speech. He spoke of the anxiety he felt during all the time the men were overseas, feeling in a measure, a personal responsibility for their welfare. He told of the pride which he felt because of their wonderful record in France and extended a welcome on behalf of the entire telephone organization. Mr. Stryker spoke of the excitement he experienced when news of the Battalion's embarkation was received and related the story of his stratagem in gaining admission to the pier where the "Seattle" docked. Mr. Lynch told of the deep interest taken in the boys by the women members of the Bell organization, his story of the ovation given them in Philadelphia being particularly touching. Mr. Kilpatrick and Mr. Henderson extended the welcome of the Engineering and Commercial Departments, expressing to the boys the pleasure they and their fellow workers felt at their safe return.

Captain Hasskarl was still in the grip of a cold, so Mr. Martin expressed for him the pleasure he enjoyed at being associated with the men of Company "E." ". . . a finer set of men he never met; the memory of their courage and manliness is something that will remain in his memory forever."

Lieutenants Foust and Collins told the crowd what they thought of Company "E"—and it was aplenty! They expressed regret that they were not permitted to remain with the outfit until the finish, as they had formed attachments for the men which they were very sorry to see broken. Following this Mr. Badger called upon a number of men of Company "E" to stand up and let the crowd see them. It was near midnight when the party was over.

The Battalion boys that lived in Harrisburg were too few for a parade, so the welcome-home reception took the form of a dinner—and a good one at that—on May the ninth. Songs and music and a bit of personal experiences punctuated the spare moments during the meal and then the diners turned their faces and chairs in the direction of the speakers' table.

The genial toastmaster of the occasion was H. C. Kunkel who, after drinking a silent toast to the departed members of the Battalion, called on Mr. Kinnard who told how proud all were of the achievements of the 406th. Mr. Lynch told of the appreciation of the hazardous tasks faced by the men of the Bell unit. Mr. Kilpatrick and Mr. Stryker expressed their appreciation of the splendid work done by these men. Captain Hasskarl spoke of the honest-to-goodness gladness the men felt in being in the U. S. A. once again.

Many of the Battalion boys were called upon to speak during the evening and most of them related interesting tales of their experience while over there.

Major Wattles who went to Harrisburg at the invitation of the Harrisburg crowd gave an inspiring talk. For many months Major Wattles was in command of Company "D"—to which the Harrisburg boys belonged—and his speech had a very personal interest to the crowd assembled.

These parties were the closing chapter. The men of the 406th have returned to their telephone plows. They have had an experience which time cannot take from them. They have the knowledge that their little organization of telephone men gave the A. E. F. two lieutenant colonels—Repp, whose knowledge of telephone engineering made itself felt over the entire allied front, and Hubbell who did such a thorough job in organizing and training the Battalion that he was sent back to the States to train other troops. It gave five majors: Glaspey, who died in the service, Wattles, Griest, Gauss and Winston. It gave three captains: Meigs, Macfarlan and Hasskarl. In addition it gave nearly a score of lieutenants, many of whom would have been captains had the war lasted a couple of months longer. Of the noncoms and enlisted personnel, what need be said? Their accomplishments are set down in these pages. Their service began when the war started. They took part in every phase of the conflict. The reports of the officers of the American forces in Europe are sufficient evidence of the reputation they established.

They are back on their telephone jobs. They are the richer by their experience in having shared in the fight to preserve democracy.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE following employees of THE BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY OF PENNSYLVANIA, THE DELAWARE AND ATLANTIC TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE COMPANY and THE DIAMOND STATE TELEPHONE COMPANY entered the Military or Naval Service of the United States during the World War, 1917-1918.

☆ *Indicates Killed in Action or Died in the Service as shown by a check of all available records*

ABRAHAM A. ABRAHAMS
CHARLES E. ADAMS
HARRY L. ADAMS
☆JOHN R. ADAMS
WILLIAM J. ADAMS
CHARLES E. ALBER
RALPH G. ALBRECHT
JOHN J. ALBRIGHT
FRED McK. ALEXANDER
CHARLES S. ALLEN
ROBERT R. ALLEN
WILLIAM H. ALLEN, JR.
ARTHUR W. ALSBERGE
CHARLES E. ALTHOUSE
MARVIN L. ALTHOUSE
FRENCH AMMONS
PAUL G. AMON
RALPH L. AMOS
EDWIN McK. AMY
JOHN W. ANDERSON
PHILIP M. ANDERSON
JOHN A. ANGEL, JR.
JAMES L. ARCHIBALD
FREDERICK W. ARGALL
JOHN W. ARGO
FRANCIS E. ARMSTRONG
JOHN D. ARMSTRONG
CHARLES C. ASHBAUGH
ALBERT W. ASHBY
HORACE G. ATCHINSON
WILLIAM L. ATHERHOLT
ROLAND G. AUGHINBAUGH
JOSHUA L. BACH
LYALL P. BAER
LEON O. BAILEY
WILLIAM H. S. BAILY
JOSEPH F. BAIR
RALPH R. BALDWIN
LAWRENCE J. BALKEY
LLOYD McC. BANKS
ROBERT J. BANSE
THOMAS BARNEY
JOHN F. BARR
WILLIAM D. BARRETT
THOMAS H. BARRON
THOMAS J. BARRY, JR.
HERMAN BARTENBACH
KARL E. BARTH
HORACE W. BARTHOLIC
☆WILLIAM B. BARTLESON
GEORGE S. BARTLETT
RAPHAEL C. BARTO
RAYMOND A. BASCHENECKER
WILLIAM H. BATEMAN
ROBERT E. BATES
WILLIAM J. BATTIN
JOHN A. BAUER
JOHN E. BAUER
WILLIAM T. BAUER
FREDERICK J. BAUGHMAN
ERNEST E. BAYER
JAMES E. BEAM
CARL L. BEAN
WILLIAM BEARDS

William Beattie
Aubrey DeV. Beauclerk
George A. Beck
William F. Beck
William H. Beck
William J. Beck
George W. Becker
John L. Becktel
Arthur A. Beisel
Albert M. Bell
☆Emmett L. Bell
Brooks E. Bennett
Levin E. Bennett
Walter C. Benz
Charles W. Berger
Francis A. Berner
Karl Bernstein
Theodore Berrier
Daniel C. Bertolette
Michael F. Beysan
E. Cliffton Bickel
Carl W. Bielstein
Max A. Bierfreund
Clarence A. Bierman
Samuel J. Bigham
Leo E. Bilboa
Milton O. Billerbeck
Clarence H. Binder
Paul R. Binder
Stanley G. Bird
Howard Bishop
Ralph C. Black
William F. Blackmar
Bernard Blank
Ira Blough
William J. Bogner
Herman A. Bohn
Howard C. Bolt
Hugh T. Boran
John O. Border
Russell W. Born
Walter H. Bornman
Earl M. Bossert
Barrett W. Boulware
George P. Bowes
John T. Boyd
Darius Boyle
Clark S. Bradford
William Bradford
Wilfred Brady
William F. Brandt
Thomas Branson, Jr.
Raymond A. Brauer
Carl W. Bredemeyer
James F. G. Breen
John R. Breen
William F. Breitenbach
Chester A. Brenner
Paul Bretherick
Joseph Brezee
William W. Brittain
Gerhard J. Brocke
Lawrence C. Brosky
Charles B. Brown
Neil L. Brown, Jr.
Wallace W. Brown
Edgar R. Bruder
Herbert J. Bruder
Jacob S. Brunhouse
Elmer J. Bucher
Robert D. Bucks
Martin H. Buehler, Jr.
Maurice S. Bulger
John E. Burke
Thomas Burke
John A. Burns
Joseph E. Burns
William R. Burrows
Paul Burton
Howard Bushnell
Edward N. Butler
Edward F. Buxton

Bernard W. Caesar
George W. Cahoon
George H. Callahan
Patrick J. Callahan
Edric W. Camp
Thomas Campbell
James F. Cannon, Jr.
Joseph A. Cannon
Harry O. Carlson
Edwin J. Carr
Charles H. Carroll
G. Thomas Cartier
Russell D. Carver
Michael J. Cassidy
Leo J. Castle
Raymond S. Caton
Edward J. Cavanaugh

Russell G. Chambers
James H. Chandler
Albert B. Charles
Charles C. Charlson
John H. Christensen
Edward B. Clark, Jr.
James R. Clark
John J. Clark
Roland E. Clark
Robert H. Close
Morris S. Clouser
Albert Coates
☆Howard H. Coffan
James W. Cogan
Peter P. Cohen
Walter K. Cohill
Austin T. Cole
Myron F. Cole
Raymond S. Cole
George K. Coleman
Francis E. Colien
Charles H. Collins
John M. Collins
Arthur D. C. Colvin
William M. Colvin
Albert R. Compton
William B. Conley
Orville G. Conover
Jennie E. Conroy
Charles E. Conway
Erle McK. Conwell
Lloyd E. Cook
William L. Cook
Vincent P. Corcoran
Michael J. Corless
Milton W. Corkron, Jr.
Leroy A. Cortwright
Ralph A. Costley
Harold G. Cousins
John W. Coverdale
Henry B. Cowan
Mortimer W. H. Cox
Robert Craigmile
Don S. Crispen
David B. Crissman
Gertrude L. Crofton
Tessie M. Croghan
Frank S. Crosland
Filbert P. Crossan
Ira R. Cumberledge
Marion K. Cummings
Raymond D. Cupps
John B. Curran
William H. D. Cussack
Herbert C. Custard
Albert L. Custer

Earle V. Dague
William W. Dailey
Anthony J. Dallett
Christopher P. Daly
Floyd L. Daniels
William J. B. Daniels
Charles W. Danley
Allard J. Davids
Rowland G. Davis
Wallis Davis
John H. Day
Arthur DeHaven
Charles A. Deitrich
Aniello DeLuco
Walter R. Demberger
Harry O. Dengler
George V. DeRevere
Gaspar Desmone
George A. Dessin
Earl A. Detwiler
Lyle C. DeVeaux
William C. Devereaux
Harry F. Devlin
Peter F. Devlin
Harvey J. Dible
William M. Dickson
George N. Dietrich
Norbert F. Dietsch
Albert J. Dietz
Bartram H. Dilks
Franklin E. Dilks
Frank J. Dillon
Charles Dittrick
William Dobbie
Robert G. Dodds
Henry G. Doerrmann
Martin P. Doherty
John H. Dolan
George A. Domsohn
Joseph J. Donahue
George A. Donbaugh
Joseph W. Donnell, Jr.
Arthur L. Donoghue

Thomas D. Donovan
John H. Dore
William J. Dougherty
Richard H. Douglas
Kenneth McI. Downes
Howard G. Downing
John F. Doyle, Jr.
Joseph F. Doyle
Richard Doyle
Thomas S. Drake
Charles D. Draper
Jacob W. Drase
Clifford H. Drew
Eugene Driscoll, Jr.
Austin M. Dryden
Leon S. Duckworth
Charles D. Dugan, Jr.
Martin J. Dugan, Jr.
George M. Dulabon
Myron F. Dull
Milton R. Dunkle
Robert L. Dunlap
James H. Dunn
☆Leo W. Durkin

William F. Eames
Charles Ebenbach
William C. Eberle
E. McClelland Echard
Edward B. Edwards
Victor Egbert
Kurt R. Egelhaaf
Verner F. Eichholz
Frank Eisenberg
Herman H. Eisenberg
Joseph Eldridge
Kenneth Eldridge
Ralph S. Eldridge
William H. Elliott
Paul J. Ellis
Raymond W. Ellis
Thomas F. Ellis
William W. Ellis
Frank Else
Albert W. Emerick
John V. Engstrom, Jr.
Thomas Ennett, Jr.
George K. Erb
Russell F. Erby
Roland A. Esslinger
Harold J. Evans
Oliver E. Evans

☆James F. Fagan
Edwin C. Fager
Walter D. Farley
Joseph D. Farrington
Charles Farwell
Irving G. Fasold
Harry W. Favinger
Courtney Fawcett
George F. Fennell
☆Clarence P. Ferguson
John Fernon
August J. Fest
Albert L. Fetter
Raymond H. Fichter
Cyril H. Fiedler
John H. Filbert
Walter F. Finkenhoefer
Howard W. Fischer
Herbert Fite
John Fitzgerald
William K. Flaherty
William G. Flannigan
Alby S. Fleming
Frank T. Floyd
☆Walter J. Flynn
Robert L. Fohl
George M. Foliart
Harry M. Foos
Lester T. Forbes
Frederick B. Ford
John J. Ford
Joseph F. Forrester
William J. Forsythe
James M. Forwood
Raymond Foulkrod
Jacob B. Foulkrod
Luther R. Foust
Herbert Fox
☆John H. Fox
Floyd M. Frampton
Charles H. Francis
Ralph E. Frank
Paul Frankenfield
Ralph C. Frantz
Carl R. Freehafer
Sylvester D. Freeman
Hugh B. Frey

John C. Friel
Thomas M. Friend
Harry R. Fritz
Herman C. Fromuth, Jr.
George H. Fry
Ross P. Fry
John F. Fuller
Chancey B. Fullerton
Marcellus S. Fulmer

Edward W. Gabriel
Jesse A. Gaghagen
John J. Gaghan
Willard J. Gaines
Robert C. Galbraith
Thomas M. Galbreath
Carlisle Gale
Cletus M. Gallagher
John F. Gallagher
Tony Gallo
Walter J. Gander
John F. Gardiner
John LaR. Garrett
Ethel F. Garson
Charles N. Gaskill
Earl I. Gaskill
Albert C. Gaster
Clyde L. Gatchel
William L. Gauntt
Joseph C. Gaus
James H. Gause
William F. Gauss
John J. Gavin
Albert V. Gee
Willard F. Geib
William G. Geiger
Wilbur A. Geiselman
☆Wilson D. George
John F. Gerboth
William R. Gerhard
Harry Gianelle
Joseph E. Gibbons
Theodore W. Gibson
Enoch T. Gifford
Henry D. Gilbert
Howard E. Giles
Eugene M. Gillespie
Thomas P. Gilligan
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